# **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. Study leave funding is moving away from a notional individual annual allocation of study leave funding, to implement a system that incorporates equity of access for all trainees, in accordance with Enhancing Junior Doctors Lives.

*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. This includes exam preparation, as the best preparation for both AKT and RCA / SCA 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.

Subscriptions are not funded except for the Fourteen Fish AKT and RCA Plus Packages.

Study leave funding cannot be used after the completion of training.

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.

A PDP entry is to be created covering the expected educational outcomes of attending the proposed course. A reflective log entry after the course is also required.

A trainee’s ALS certificate may expire during their GP Training Programme. If a trainee rotates through a department that requires them to possess such a certificate (or any other non-curricular qualification) in order to work in the department; it is the Host Trust's responsibility to ensure that the trainee has a currently valid certificate, and if necessary, provide them with access to the relevant course and fund it.

It is the trainee’s responsibility to contact the Host organisation ahead of their placement and follow any necessary processes to approve and attend ALS courses.

In no circumstances will ALS or PLS courses be funded through HEE’s study claim process.

Trainees who have been selected as suitable for additional training opportunities such as Academic Clinical Fellowship may have additional financial support towards academic study such as a master’s degree. This may be funded externally as part of their post, or if locally funded then trainees can apply for support towards the cost of such programmes. Each case will be reviewed individually and will depend on trainees making good progress and support from their academic and educational supervisors. The funding may be a contribution rather than total costs of academic study.

Other study leave applications to fund a Postgraduate Certificate, Diploma or Master’s during General Practice training will not be funded. General practice training is for a relatively short period of time with a lot to fit into that time. For that reason, the GP school feels that you should be concentrating your time and energy on meeting the requirements to qualify as a GP.

If you have a strong interest in a particular area, we encourage you to consider applying for a post-CCT Fellowship as a way of pursuing your interest.

If you use study leave funding to attend a course, you are required to enter a reflective learning log about your learning on your e-portfolio.

Recording credits on the Fourteen Fish portfolio.

* We do not routinely fund FourteenFish minutes in ST1 or ST2 GP placements.
* In ST3, in addition to the free minutes that are offered for familiarisation and the minutes that are included as part of exam booking at trainees’ expense, we will refund up to an additional 800 minutes from study leave budgets. You can claim up to 400 minutes on one claim form.
* There is local discretion for individual trainees, identified as being in need of enhanced support, to have further additional minutes reimbursed after consideration by the Head of School.

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

## Level I

1. 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).
2. Basic life support training certified to meet MRCGP requirements.
3. One Level 3 child and adult safeguarding course during training.
4. 14 Fish blended learning package for AKT and RCA.

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

Automatic approval for all trainees, whether requiring additional support or not

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Comments** |
| Structured Education Programme | Mandatory release, no funding implications |
| RCGP-provided or accredited RCA / SCA course | One course attendance per trainee |
| RCGP-provided or accredited AKT course | One course attendance per trainee |
| Fourteen fish AKT and RCA / SCA support | Funding for whole blended package per trainee. |
| BLS training |  |
| Child Safeguarding  Adult Safeguarding | One course attendance per trainee. These should be completed as soon as possible after starting GPST training. |
| GP Update Day e.g., NB Medical or Red Whale | For all in ST3 |

***Courses requiring HoS approval for funding, although time off might be authorised***

|  |
| --- |
| Repeat courses already undertaken e.g. RCA / SCA or AKT preparation |
| Events outside the region unless authorised by a TPD |

We will also consider requests for RCA / SCA and AKT courses that are not provided or accredited by the RCGP. These must be discussed with your TPD and the Study Leave team before booking.

**Automatic approval by at the discretion of the CS if the last ARCP was outcome 1- satisfactory progress.**

Examples of relevant discretionary/enhancement activities relevant to the GP curriculum, that will be approved provided:

- the area of study has been agreed as appropriate at Educational Supervisors Review

-  are reflected in the PDP

- the CS agrees that progress in the post is satisfactory

- the rota manger approves the leave (or in GP practices, the CS)

- the courses are aimed at GPs

Please note this list is not exhaustive, and others may be considered for approval.

Some courses will be regarded as Level III and more suitable for ST3 trainees who are progressing normally and approaching the end of training.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| RCGP provided or accredited courses  RCGP Annual conference – 1 attendance in training unless presenting a poster or workshop etc.  Equality and Diversity  LGBTQIA+ health  Deprivation  Migrant Health  Health Inequality  Contraception/sexual health courses  Minor surgery  Joint injections  Palliative care  BASICS  ENT  Ophthalmology  Dermatology  Mental Health | Homelessness  Prescribing  Children and young people’s health  Dementia  Female Genital Mutilation  Equality and Diversity  Safeguarding  Information Governance  Business Management  Courses related to adult learning, self-regulation and reflective learning  Veterans’ Health  Paediatrics  Learning Disability  Medical Education  Leadership  Effective Prescribing |

**Specific courses for trainees requiring extra support - these courses will only be available with HoS agreement**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dyslexia Support | Linguistic Support |
| Reflective Writing | Specific Support Programmes |

**Study Leave Application Process**

The application process is electronic and is described on the HEE North West website at [Study Leave | Health Education North West (nwpgmd.nhs.uk)](https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/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.

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.

Trainees who are absent from work for the following reasons are notusually eligible for study leave

maternity/paternity leave

sick leave

adoption leave

compassionate paid/unpaid leave

any other paid or unpaid leave i.e. jury service.

However, in exceptional circumstances, study leave may still be possible for some trainees in the above categories. Trainees should seek clarification of the contractual and medical indemnity issues with the relevant Lead Employer and the provider of the course/conference/educational programme which they have applied to attend. This should then be shared with the TPD to inform the decision-making process.

Study Leave in OOP will only be available to trainees who are Out of Programme, OOP**T**. There must be clear evidence linking the application to the specific curriculum requirement for the trainee’s individual specialty.

Funding and Study Leave for statutory and mandatory training is an employer responsibility and cannot be claimed for from study leave.

**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 WTE. 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.

**Study Leave for Overseas Events**

Study leave is not generally available for overseas events, however one international/meeting, **providing all other curriculum requirements are met, will be considered** for each doctor in training for any one programme, which can be defined as Foundation, Core, Higher or otherwise every three years.

If attending an international opportunity is evidenced to be cheaper than a UK alternative/equivalent, then the international opportunity will usually be approved and would not count as the one occurrence above.

If service requirements prevent a trainee in attending a UK based educational opportunity an international/equivalent could be considered.

International study leave should occur when the learning outcomes from the course are not available in the UK (joint societies with a UK and Ireland remit for these purposes are considered as UK). Attendance at courses should be taken as close to the base as possible.

HEE Deans have agreed the following principles:

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.

For accommodation, in alignment with the agreed maximum rate for study leave claims within the UK, the overnight rate should not exceed £150 per night.

Subsistence expenses will not usually be reimbursed by HEE.

Requests to attend overseas study course/conferences will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, such circumstances include

* The presentation of significant research findings from within an NIHR recognised academic clinical fellowship or clinical lectureship.
* The presentation of research undertaken as part of a clinical training programme.
* Where the course is not available in the UK.
* Where the course or activity is part of the college curriculum or guidelines on required training.
* Where the course is set out as a mandatory requirement of college training to reach the required qualification to practice.

For international study leave requests where the individual will be presenting, such applications should take priority.

The conference/course must provide a clearly stated curriculum outcome and there must be a documented discussion with the ES about the clear need of the course/conference to meet curriculum requirements.

A full programme should be provided.

A report covering the entirety of the leave may be requested from the doctor in training after attendance.

In some smaller specialties it can be difficult to achieve significant critical mass for events within the UK and in such specialties TPDs may consider supporting attendance at European events that are particularly relevant to the specialty.

The final decision on support for overseas events rests with the Primary Care Dean, on behalf of the Postgraduate Dean.

Study leave will not be approved to attend exams overseas.

**Rob Stokes**

**Head of GP School**

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