

Developing people for health and healthcare

Study Leave for Doctors and Dentists in Training in the Oxford PGMDE programmes

Revised and updated Feb 2013

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Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that doctors and dentists in PGMDE funded training posts have access to a standardised system of study leave. All applications should be considered fairly, equitably and consistently.

The guidance has been agreed by the Directors of Medical Education (DMEs) of all the Trusts, the Foundation School Director, the Heads of Schools, the Dental Dean and the Postgraduate Dean.

All doctors and dentists in educationally approved posts, apart from those in their first foundation year (FY1), may apply to their employer for study leave.

The Terms and Conditions of Service for Trainees allow up to 30 days per year of discretionary study leave.

Educational approval for study leave rests with the Trust DMEs collaborating with educational supervisors, training programme directors and the specialty schools whilst taking into account service needs within the Trust.

Applications for study leave should be made to the DME, with the approval of the trainee's Clinical or Educational Supervisor.. In addition approval may be needed from the Clinical Director of the unit in which the trainee is working so that the clinical service is maintained.

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General Principles for Study Leave in the Oxford PGMDE programmes

1. Study Leave Year

The year's study leave and its allocated funding should be tailored to the individual trainee. It will begin on the day of appointment to a programme and not relate to the fiscal or calendar year.

2. The Study Leave Week

Time allocated for study leave relates to the number of working days missed over the leave period. Weekends should only be counted when they coincide with a duty period.

3. Study Leave Funds

These are managed by the DMEs, who can only undertake this responsibility effectively with support from Specialty Training Committee, School Boards and Educational Supervisors. These funds should not be devolved further within the Trusts to Directorate or Departmental levels.

The funds are paid monthly by the PGMDE to each Trust, the amount being proportional to their number of eligible training posts.

4. Access to Annual Funding

The trainee is only eligible for a year's funding in any one year and every application for funds must be accompanied by a record of the funding he/she has already received on the programme. Tracking this funding is the responsibility of the trainee and will be monitored on the "Intrepid Post Management System ®".

Foundation and Core Trainees may access their funding allocation for the entire year even though they may be in an individual trust for only six months.

All trainees on Oxford PGMDE funded training programme may apply for a £600 grant regardless of grade or specialty to support their study leave (**except** *FY1; and DF1 who must attend their 30 day Deanery programme*). In common with all grants at public expense, agreement is needed in advance and detailed receipts are required to support the eventual payment.

5. Planning

DMEs need to co-ordinate the study leave approval, acknowledging the education committees' recommendations. Essential, desirable and low priority courses will be defined by individual specialties. Study leave planning should occur within the context of the entire training programme and not just on an annual basis. The aim is that there is adequate access to study leave and it is planned

Individual trainee's study leave programme will be reviewed at each RITA / ARCP panel. Matters arising as a result of the assessment should be communicated to the trainee and his/her local Specialty Tutor if applicable. The Specialty Tutor should ensure that the trainee's Educational Supervisor and DME is told of any problems

6. Booking

At least six weeks' notice should be provided by the trainee and the local organisers, the PGMDE or specialty training committee. Approval for study leave should only be given exceptionally if the notice period is shorter.

7. Local Training Programmes

All trainees should attend a relevant local course in preference to equivalent external courses.

The local or PGMDE training programmes run in HE Thames Valley include:

- 15 days per year for FY2, DF2 and Dental Career Development posts
- 20 days for Specialty (inc. LAT, Core and GPVTS whilst in hospital).

A requirement is that the teaching is in protected time and the programme is published in advance. It is good practice to involve the trainees in planning these programmes.

Trainees should sign a register confirming attendance at the course, which will be monitored by the schools, and persistent absence reported to DMEs. It is the trainee's responsibility to make sure they attend at least 70% of these training sessions. The sessions should be given approval by DMEs for internal leave for FY2; DF2 and Core Medical and Dental Care Development Trainees and by Schools and the PGMDE for SpRs/STRs.

Activities such as regular departmental teaching, audit and Clinical Governance are part of a Trust's normal activities and are not counted against study leave.

8. Funding for new courses

Schools and Specialty Training Committees wishing to set up new courses can seek funding by "top-slicing" their trainees' funding equally throughout HE Thames Valley, provided that this involves a relatively minor proportion of the total allocation, a majority of trainees consent and it does not unduly disadvantage those that need funding for other courses.

9. Private Study Leave

This will only be granted for a defined purpose such as examination preparation (if the examination in question is necessary for career progression), writing up research, writing review papers etc. DMEs will only grant these requests if there are written objectives agreed between the trainee and their Educational Supervisor (ES). The ES must agree that the leave is reasonable and appropriate to the context of the trainee's overall training and that the service commitment can be covered. The final approval is with the DME. Afterwards it is good practice to evaluate the success and usefulness of this study leave. Aims and outcomes must be recorded in the trainee's study leave record / portfolio. The general guidance (although exceptions can be made) is that maximum allocation should only be 5 days in any 6 month period. DMEs should devise systems to monitor that objectives are set.

10. On-Call whilst on Study Leave

Trainees should not do on-call whilst on study leave, even if the period of study leave is short. Ideally this means not being on call the night before study leave. Failure to do this reduces the value of study leave to the trainee and is poor value for money to the PGMDE.

11. Locum Cover

Study leave funding is allocated for fees and expenses. Locum cover is not part of this. The need for locum cover should be minimised by good planning. Provided that adequate notice is given when study leave is agreed, the Trust/Department should ensure that cover is provided. Locum cover if required needs to be paid for by the Trust.

12. Learning Agreements, Attendance and Monitoring

All trainees should include a record of their study leave in their portfolio, which they will be expected to continue throughout their postgraduate career. This record will cover the aims of the study leave, an evaluation of how well these objectives were met, as well as informing the learning agreement and future study leave planning.

Study leave will not be granted unless the trainee and ES have signed a learning agreement and the trainee has completed all necessary mandatory training in the trust in which they work. The DME will need reassurance about this before leave is granted.

Unless in their first post, a 'Personal Study Leave Account (PSLA)' is essential to the study leave application, which shows courses, time and funding granted by the previous employer(s). This record is completed by the current employing trust, and stored on the trainees' computerised training and employment record (Intrepid®)

The PSLA should be given to their Educational Supervisor at each new attachment.

13. Evaluation

Trainees should critically evaluate every episode of study leave in terms of its general quality and its value to them. Most importantly, such critical evaluation, particularly emphasising what the trainee learnt, should be part of a learning portfolio.

14. Quality Indicators

Schools running local courses for examination preparation should keep exam success statistics and any other relevant outcome measure to assure the Deanery and DMEs of the quality of their programmes

15. Special Requirements

There are a number of specialties with expensive and time-consuming courses that are regarded as essential. Funding from the study leave budget will not cover these and support will need to be found from elsewhere.

16. Trainees at the end of their training

Post- CCT / CCST trainees will continue to be eligible for study leave. The nature of the study will be different from pre- CCT / CCST in this transition period to a consultant appointment. Post- CCT / CCST trainees should register with their College for CPD as soon as they have obtained their CCT / CCST.

17. Less than Full Time Trainees

These have identical needs to those of full-time trainees. However, Specialty Education Committees and DMEs should be vigilant in ensuring access is the same as for full time trainees pro-rata.

18. Overseas Graduates

Overseas graduates should have precisely the same opportunities as UK graduates. However, these trainees may be less familiar with the UK study leave system and therefore STCs and DMEs should be proactive when it appears such trainees are not making use of their study leave opportunities.

19. Invitations to Present Papers Abroad

The Postgraduate Deans (COPMeD) guidance states that “attendance may be possible but costs are likely to be only partially met by the study leave budget”. Care must be exercised if pharmaceutical company sponsorship is provided. Advice about its appropriateness must be sought from the DMEs. Departments sending their trainees on such conferences should be prepared to find alternative sources of funding.

DMEs may wish to seek the views of Specialty Tutors / TPDs on an individual basis.

20. Trust and Speciality Requirements

Individual trusts, other employers and the trainee's specialty may have additional guidelines on the approval and allocation of Study Leave. It is recommended that trainees consult these as well as the PGMDE Guidelines when they start their posts.

21. Disputes and Appeals

Disputes between trainees and departments should be referred to the DME for resolution. If no agreement can be reached or if the dispute is with the DME, appeal to the Dean is the next step. All appeals require written documentation.

Guidance for Foundation Year 2 Trainees (FY2s)

Study Leave should be used to:

- Support the aims of the Foundation Programme
- Achieve the foundation outcomes
- Explore career opportunities and improve wider professional development

FY2s may take up to a maximum of 30 days annual study leave, 15 days of which should be used to undertake obligatory generic training and the formal foundation teaching programmes within the Local Education Provider. The remaining 15 days may be used for study activities outside the Local Education Provider, of these 10 days being available for “taster experiences” in chosen specialties. 5 days of this may be borrowed from FY2 allocation and taken during FY1 year.

A maximum of 5 days of external study leave can be taken in each 4 month attachment. Study leave time may be granted for Foundation Trainees to sit national examinations but no funding is available for this purpose.

Study leave planning should be incorporated in the educational agreement drawn up between the trainee and his / her Educational Supervisor. These plans should be revisited at each appraisal. DMEs should monitor these to ensure that such planning is taking place. Trainees are expected to attend 70% of locally provided training opportunities.

Guidance for Dental Foundation Year 2 Trainees (DF2s) and Dental Career Development Trainees (CDPs)

Study Leave should be used to:

- Support the aims of the Foundation Programme
- Achieve the foundation outcomes
- Explore career opportunities and improve wider professional development

DF2s may take up to a maximum of 30 days annual study leave, 15 days of which should be used to attend the Deanery Study Programme which is organised by the DF2 Training Programme Director. 10 of the remaining days may be used for study activities outside the Local Education Provider, of these 5 days being available for “taster experiences” in chosen specialties. 5 additional days may be used to attend obligatory generic training within the Local Education Provider.

A maximum of 5 days of external study leave can be taken in each 6 month attachment. Study leave time may be granted for Foundation Trainees to sit national examinations but no funding is available for this purpose.

Study leave planning should be incorporated in the educational agreement drawn up between the trainee and his / her Educational Supervisor. These plans should be revisited at each appraisal. DMEs should monitor these to ensure that such planning is taking place. Trainees are expected to attend 70% of locally provided (Deanery and Local Education Provider) training opportunities.

Guidance for Core (CTs) and Specialty Registrars (STRs) / Specialist Registrars SpRs (including GPVTS when in their hospital posts)

Study Leave should:

- Enhance learning
- Provide career advancement (linked to curriculum requirements)
- Be planned as an integral part of a training programme
- Be incorporated in the educational agreement drawn up between the trainee and their Educational Supervisor
- Provide education and training not otherwise available in the work place setting
- Include a majority component that is defined as essential for the specialty or programme, with a proportion remaining for tailoring to individual needs, where considered integral to the training programme.

Specialty trainees: are entitled to up to a maximum of 30 days Study Leave per year. This normally includes 20 days per annum for Locally Provided educational activity including obligatory training and the core or specialty curriculum teaching programmes. This includes external university programmes that dental specialty trainees attend as part of their programme.

This leaves 10 days for discretionary study leave each year adjusted proportionally for length of attachment. The trainee may apply for 5 days of private study leave in any 6 month period may be considered leading up to an examination that is **necessary** for career progression but this will only be considered prior to the first occasion that the trainee sits this examination.

The number of days will be entered on the trainee's record on Intrepid® at source by the Deanery. This will make it clear and simple for each trust to allocate and monitor the discretionary study leave they control.

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