

NHS EDUCATION FOR SCOTLAND (NES)

Postgraduate Medical and Dental Training: Study Leave Policy and Operational Guide

INTRODUCTION

1. This policy and operational guide is underpinned by the provisions contained within:

[The Gold Guide \(Reference Guide for Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK: 7th edition, 2018\)](#)

[The Dental Gold Guide \(A Guide to Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK: 4th edition, 2016\)](#)

[The Foundation Programme Reference Guide \(2016\)](#)

[Hospital Medical and Dental Staff...Terms and Conditions of Service \(2003\)](#)

[GP Training Contract & Terms and Conditions \(2011\)](#)

A. PRINCIPLES

KEY PRINCIPLES

2. Doctors and dentists in training*, in conjunction with their TPDs (Training Programme Directors)/ FPDs (Foundation Programme Directors)/ CTAs (Core Training Advisors); have access to a standard system in which applications for study leave are considered on a fair, equitable and consistent basis.

3. Doctors and dentists in training* should develop coherent plans for study leave in the context of their training programme and curricular requirements. They must take into account their individual educational needs as agreed with their TPD / FPD / CTA and/or Educational Supervisors.

[*This group includes all public health specialty trainees]

4. Study leave activity should enhance clinical education and training, with activities planned in advance so as to avoid disruption to services. This should be done in conjunction with both service colleagues / units and TPD / FPD / CTA / Educational Supervisor.

5. Study leave activity should be used to support the aims of the training programme and/or explore career opportunities and improve wider professional development.

6. The following trainees are entitled to 30 days of study leave per annum:

- F2 (foundation year 2 trainee)
- CT (core trainee)
- LAT (locum appointment for training)
- ST (specialty trainee)
- DCT (dental core trainee)
- DStR (dental specialty registrar)

This allowance will incorporate a set number of days for a training programme's delivered educational programme, e.g. regional teaching [see section 17 below].

This allowance will incorporate curriculum-required mandatory training courses.

The remainder will be available to the trainee to use in accordance with this policy.

Less than full time (LTFT) trainees are entitled to study leave as per arrangements set out in employment terms and conditions.

7. If a mandatory course is not available to a trainee at their base location, they can apply for study leave funding to cover travel, subsistence and accommodation expenses.
8. F1 doctors are not eligible for study leave, however local opportunities are available to complete tasters / mandatory training [See section 22-23 below].
9. Longitudinal dental foundation trainees (LDFTs) in year two of training (LDFT2) may take up to 5 days study leave from non-practice days, in addition to the generic education programme.

ELIGIBILITY

10. Eligible: Trainees in approved training programmes (subject to exceptions in section 11 below).
11. Not eligible:
- F1 doctors (see sections 22-23 below for exceptions)
 - Trainees who defer (or have deferred) entry to training programme
 - Trainees who are 'out of programme' (unless in an OOP training post within Scotland)
 - Defence deanery trainees (medical and dental)
 - GP retainers
 - LAS (Locum Appointment for Service) appointees
 - Trainees who have attained their CCT / CCST and are in their period of grace
 - Dental foundation trainees (also known as dental vocational trainees)

APPROVED USES OF STUDY LEAVE (with and without funding)

12. Study leave time and/or funding can be applied for to support the activities listed in sections 13-20 below.
13. Attendance at Courses:
- Courses to assist with the acquisition of technical skills and/or knowledge not easily acquired in the clinical setting, e.g. surgical skills course, acquisition of a theoretical knowledge base such as basic sciences, statistics etc.
 - Courses to assist with the acquisition of an appropriate knowledge base or specialist knowledge associated with clinical training, e.g. ALS or equivalent (and refreshers).
 - Professional development courses, in preparation for the many facets of the trainees' future roles as a consultant/specialist in the NHS.
 - E-learning packages: with appropriate approval from the TPD / FPD / CTA, recognised educational courses and training may be undertaken, e.g. Epilepsy Distance Learning course, e-ALS etc.
 - Exam preparation courses.
14. Attendance at Specialty Association meetings or conferences.
15. Professional and academic examinations: trainees are entitled to apply for study leave time and associated travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses. Examination fees cannot be funded.
16. Private Study with a specific and defined purpose, e.g. exam preparation (maximum of five working days per exam), write-up of PhD. [See section 24 below in relation to foundation doctors.]
17. Attendance at teaching, i.e. delivered educational programmes where trainee is required to be away from service. Trainee does not need to make a formal application for study leave unless they require to claim expenses. Attendance at teaching can include:

- trainees in a national or multi-site specialty programme travelling to one central location to participate in postgraduate teaching
- foundation trainees attending their educational programme
- specialty trainees attending weekly teaching session held at local base

18. Programme events: for example, a TPD might invite an external speaker to come to a central location to provide teaching/training in support of identified educational priorities. This would benefit a group of trainees (the TPD could “charge” this to the programme, rather than identifying expenditure against individual trainees).

19. Taster sessions (F2): foundation trainees have the opportunity to try out a specialty in advance of making future career choices. An application for study leave time must be made through Turas. Foundation trainees are entitled to two taster sessions (maximum of five days for each) during their two-year programme.

20. Participation in quality workstream events, e.g. member of panel at quality management visit. This applies to trainee associates only.

ACTIVITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR STUDY LEAVE

21. Study leave time and/or funding will not be approved to support the following activities/resources:

- Unit meetings or other in-hospital meetings not specifically organised for trainees as part of the delivered educational programme, e.g. audit meetings
- Travel to/from training attachments which are outwith the programme region
- Examination fees
- University provided degree courses (undergraduate and postgraduate)
- Attendance at graduation ceremonies
- Recruitment events / job interviews
- Attendance at ARCP
- Educational materials (reference books, posters for presentation etc)
- Visas
- Wifi costs

EXCEPTIONS

22. F1 doctors are not eligible for study leave, however, local arrangements exist to enable F1 doctors to undertake:

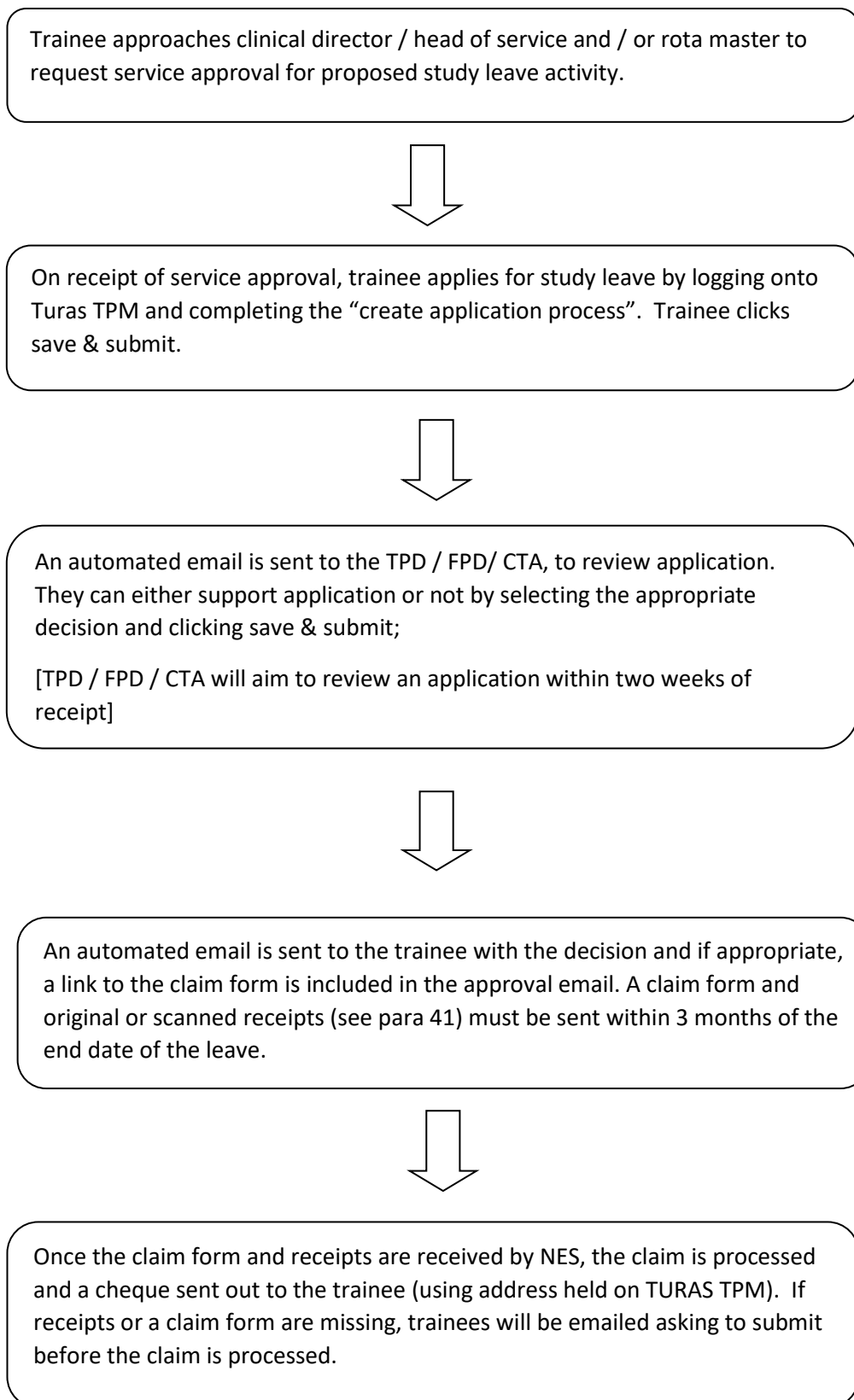
- Tasters (towards the end of the F1 year, in the last block where possible - maximum five days per taster, two tasters permitted during two-year foundation programme). To fully benefit from tasters, F1 doctors should discuss their career aspirations with their educational supervisor at the middle of the F1 year and plan accordingly for the last block. Application for taster must be made through Turas.
- ALS course.
- PSA (Prescribing Safety Assessment) - travel and subsistence for one sitting.

23. FPDs have discretion to approve study leave applications for foundation doctors (F1 and F2) attending other events/educational opportunities, e.g. attending a conference, mandatory course not available at base location, simulation training, FPD recommendation of a remedial course.

24. Foundation doctors cannot take study leave to prepare for specialty examinations, but they can (in F2) use study leave to sit the examination.

B. OPERATIONAL

MAKING A STUDY LEAVE APPLICATION AND CLAIM



25. All applications are made online via [TURAS TPM](#) (Training Programme Management). Study leave applications in any other format will not be accepted.
26. A trainee can view the status of their application(s) at any point in the process via their personal page on TURAS TPM.
27. Applications for study leave must be made a minimum of six weeks in advance of the activity. In exceptional circumstances (with service approval), applications can be made within six weeks of the activity. Retrospective applications will not be accepted.
28. When making the application, as much detail as possible regarding the activity should be entered, all mandatory fields must be completed and, where applicable, realistic estimates of all cost elements should be entered to allow full consideration by the TPD / FPD /CTA.
29. In cases where a completed and approved application is submitted without any estimate of costs, it will be assumed that the study leave activity will not incur any expenditure. As such, no claim form will be generated and the TPD / FPD /CTA's decision will be based on the assumption of no costs being claimed.
30. On making an application, trainee will be required to complete a declaration that permissions have been sought from the trainee's Clinical Director / head of service and/or rota master for time out of clinical duties. The application will not proceed unless this named individual is entered as part of the online form. Once the declaration is completed, an automated email will be sent to the selected TPD / FPD /CTA for approval.
31. Should the declaration be found to be untrue/falsified, this will be treated as a probity issue and trainee may be reported to the GMC or GDC.
32. Applications for 'leave only' (without reclaimable expenses) should be submitted via TURAS TPM. Such applications still need appropriate service and TPD / FPD / CTA approval. In such cases, the applicant will not be provided with a claim form; but they will be in receipt of an automated email confirming approval (or otherwise).
33. Where an application is not supported by TPD / FPD /CTA, it will be maintained on the trainee's record with the reason for non-approval. Any concerns or outstanding issues about the decision should be referred directly to the TPD / FPD /CTA (see paragraphs 64-67).
34. For the purpose of recording days taken, the study leave year begins from the trainee's date of appointment.
35. There is no carry forward of unused days from one study leave year to the next.
36. NHS Education for Scotland is unable to make direct payments to course/conference organisers. Trainees must pay the costs and claim back the approved expenses.
37. A trainee can withdraw a study leave application at any point in the process, e.g. if course is cancelled or trainee is unable to attend (personal circumstances). The application will be removed and marked as 'withdrawn' in the trainee's personal record on TURAS TPM.

CLAIMING EXPENSES IN RELATION TO A STUDY LEAVE ACTIVITY

38. An expenses claim form will automatically be sent by email to the trainee if expenses have been applied for and approved with full or limited funding. The confirmation email contains a link to the claim form.

39. The trainee should fully complete the claim form before returning it to the NES, with original or scanned copies of receipts attached (see also para 41). The claim form and receipts can be returned at any point from the time they receive the form until three months after the end date of the study leave activity. Unless there are specific mitigating circumstances, claims received after this deadline will not be processed.

40. Normally, expenses will not be reimbursed until after the event.

41. Certificates of attendance, invoices or fee notes are not accepted as a receipt. The amounts paid/received must be stated on the receipt for it to be valid. Where original receipts are scanned in order to submit electronic copies, both sides of the receipt must be copied and the trainee is required to retain original receipt for period of three years for audit purposes.

42. In cases where internet bookings have been made, 'proof of purchase' documentation will be accepted.

43. Where available, a copy of 'certificate of attendance' should be submitted with the claim form to accompany receipts.

44. It is essential that the GMC or GDC number is fully completed on the claim form to ensure no delay in payment.

45. Approved and receipted expenses will be reimbursed by cheque via NES Central Offices and they will be sent to the name and address recorded on TURAS TPM. Cheques are processed on a weekly basis so delays in payment will be kept to a minimum.

46. Trainee expenses only will be reimbursed. Costs for family, friends or other trainees will not be reimbursed.

TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

[This section represents an agreed policy as developed by the NES Partnership Forum with representation from various organisations.]

47. The cheapest forms of transport and accommodation should be used at all times. Expenses shall be paid to meet actual disbursements and shall not be viewed as a source of remuneration.

48. No first class travel will be reimbursed unless it can be proved to be cheaper than standard class travel. If not cheaper, the equivalent standard class fare will be reimbursed.

49. Accommodation should be booked which provides best value for money, and will be approved at the discretion of the TPD / FPD / CTA (maximum limit of £75.00 per night).

50. All claims for reimbursement must be accompanied by original or scanned copies of receipts. The following are not classed as receipts: boarding passes, invoices, certificates of attendance, statements of accounts, course flyers, and confirmations of course booking (if no fee is stated). See also para 41.

51. Mileage allowance: 24p per mile (public transport rate)

52. Additional passenger (attending same event): 5p per mile per passenger (this must be entered separately and the name of the passenger clearly stated).

53. Costs for appropriate insurance cover for relevant approved leave will not be reimbursed.

SUBSISTENCE

54. Actual receipted costs can be claimed up to the following maximum limits:

- Absence of 5-10 hours (must include 12.00-14.00): £5.00
- Absence exceeding 10 hours (must end after 19.00): £15.00
- Full 24 hour period: £20.00

55. Course dinners will only be reimbursed up to maximum of £20.00

56. Alcoholic drinks and other non-food items included in receipts will not be reimbursed.

TPD / FPD / CTA RESPONSIBILITY

57. Study leave will be managed in relation to training programmes. A Notional Annual Allocation (NAA) is determined by the agreed number of posts in a programme, and forms the basis of the budget to be actively managed by the TPD / FPD /CTA. Programme budget is allocated at beginning of each financial year (commencing 1 April). The purpose of the NAA is to allow programme budgets to be set on an equitable basis.

58. Foundation Programme Directors do not manage a programme-specific budget, however they assess and approve applications in relation to a nationally allocated Foundation School budget.

59. Authority for any funding comes from the TPD / FPD / CTA and whilst the NAA may be used as a reference point it should not be viewed as a financial restriction on individual trainees.

60. TPD / FPD / CTA has management responsibility for all educational activities undertaken as part of their training programme. As such, they are expected to fully assess each application in light of educational need and relevance as well as budget availability. Their decision is based on all available information and is recorded by the completion of the online application.

61. TPD / FPD / CTAs have the discretion to approve any application but with a maximum financial restriction as stipulated by TPD / FPD / CTA.

62. Programme directors have a responsibility to ensure that in all instances, best 'value for money' is achieved by focusing use of the available funding on core and mandatory curricular requirements. Where relevant, and where funding is available from their budget, TPDs / FPDs may procure appropriate resources, e.g. visiting lecturers, training DVDs / materials / equipment; which would benefit all trainees on the programme. In this case, the NAA does not apply and PDs can top-slice a proportion of the budget.

63. In order to utilise a proportion of their budget for a resource which would provide benefit to all trainees, TPDs should make a request by email to study.leave@nes.scot.nhs.uk or dentalstudyleave@nes.scot.nhs.uk. Costs of £500 or less will be approved and processed by study leave team leads (medical or dental). Any costs of £500+ will be approved by members of the Study Leave Operational Group or escalated to the Medical Directorate Executive Team / Associate Postgraduate Dental Dean (Core and Specialty) for a decision. These requests must comply with the approved uses of study leave [sections 9-16]. Please note that requests for simulation equipment are excluded from this process, such requests are reviewed by NES Medicine Simulation Collaborative.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

64. Where a study leave application is rejected by the trainee's Clinical Director / Head of Department on service grounds, the trainee should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their TPD / FPD / CTA.

65. If the study leave application is rejected by the TPD / FPD / CTA on educational or other grounds and the trainee is dissatisfied with this outcome then they should, in the first instance, discuss the reasons directly with the TPD / FPD / CTA in an attempt to resolve the issue.

66. In exceptional circumstances, where the trainee remains dissatisfied with the outcome after discussions with both their clinical director / head of department and their TPD / FPD / CTA; the trainee should formally write, outlining in full their grounds for appeal, to:

Dental	Associate Postgraduate Dental Dean - Core & Specialty Training (APDD)
Medicine	Lead Dean / Director (Postgraduate Dean or GP Director) (LDD)

67. The APDD or LDD will consider the request for an appeal and if applicable, investigate the full facts of the application before informing the trainee of their final decision. Requests for appeal must be submitted to APDD or LDD within two weeks of the original request being declined. APDD or LDD will respond to an appeal request within two weeks of receipt.

CONTACT US

68. Medical trainees: study.leave@nes.scot.nhs.uk

69. Dental trainees: dentalstudyleave@nes.scot.nhs.uk