

Study Leave for GP trainees:

FAQs to accompany the NES cross-specialty guidance.

How much study leave am I entitled to as a GP trainee?

Trainees are permitted up to a total of 30 days' study leave per academic year. During GP attachments, approximately 50% of this is allocated to Local Teaching (see below).

Less than Full-Time Trainees (LTFTTs) are entitled to the same amount of time for study leave as a full-time trainee on a pro-rata basis. This is distributed over the whole of training, so that all trainees come to the end of training having had the same number of days of study leave.

Study leave must be requested and approved in advance. This should be in time to allow rota and cover arrangements to be put in place, and in all circumstances should be at least 6 weeks before the start of the leave.

Who needs to approve my study leave?

This is done in 2 stages:

1. Service level approval for each episode of study leave is given by the Clinical Supervisor / Educational Supervisor working with you in the post affected by the leave. This allows for management of service provision and fair distribution of leave amongst clinical staff.
2. Deanery level approval, including approval of funding, is given by your Training Programme Director (TPD). This allows the TPD to have an overview of your study leave requirements and requests. It also facilitates fair distribution of resources for study leave amongst trainees as a group.

What happens after I get initial approval from my Clinical Supervisor? How do I submit it for deanery approval?

Study leave requests are managed through TURAS. As part of the submission, you must complete a self-declaration, confirming that you have supervisor approval. All requests are then considered by your TPD.

Why does my TPD need to approve my study leave request?

The TPD has responsibility for monitoring each trainee's study leave allowance and for fair distribution of the study leave budget between all trainees. They must ensure that study leave time and funding are only used for education that is relevant to the trainee's future GP career. TURAS does not allow additional information to justify a request for study leave. If you are not sure that your request is appropriate, you can contact your TPD for advice. The TPD may e-mail you for further clarification before considering approval. You should be prepared to justify why you wish to attend a specific course.

The TPD will make a judgement as to whether the request is reasonable, considering the GP curriculum, your individual learning needs, time and cost involved, along with equity of distribution. TPDs can decide "Approved with Funding", "Approved without Funding" or "Not Approved".

What about my regular Local Teaching?

During GP attachments a number of days of your study leave allowance are automatically allocated for your Local Teaching programme. The exact number is determined locally and may include days for activities such as Induction.

The Local Teaching programme is arranged centrally and does not require booking. You do not apply on TURAS for this study leave unless you need travel expenses to attend.

If you miss a Local Teaching session due to sick leave or annual leave the study leave allowance for that session can be kept and used at another time.

Any course that requires individual booking is not part of Local Teaching and therefore requires a study leave application on TURAS.

What about Hospital-based Teaching?

During Hospital attachments a number of days are arranged for GP trainee education. These are not centrally administered. You need to apply for study leave to show that you have requested time off from the hospital department and that the request has been granted.

What courses are approved?

Your TPD can approve any course that is appropriate to your education and development but must be specific to your career intentions as a GP, and therefore should relate to part of the RCGP curriculum. Courses should be appropriate to the goals expected for your stage of training. You may need to discuss your request with your TPD to give them more information.

What courses are funded?

There is a nominal budget of £600 for each trainee for each part of training – ST1, ST2 and ST3. There is no automatic entitlement to this funding. You must have appropriate reasons to request it. All funding is paid as reimbursement of expenses following submission of receipts.

Funding is granted for any course that is appropriate to your education and development, but must be specific to your career intentions as a GP and based on an area of the GP curriculum. There are some specific rules, listed below:

- There is no funding for any exam fees.
- There is no funding for exam preparation courses – MRCGP or diploma exams. However, NES has negotiated a discounted fee for the Fourteen Fish AKT package, and we will refund the discounted fee if a claim is made on TURAS.
- NES will not give funding for a course on a topic where there is already similar education provided locally at no cost to the trainee.
- RCGP annual conference fee will be funded up to a maximum of £200, or fully funded if you are presenting a poster or workshop.
- NES will fund course fees for individual GP Continuing Professional Development courses but will not fund an annual subscription to a set of courses.
- Courses which are expensive and could use most of your nominal budget are likely to only be part-funded as we prefer you to spread funding over a broader range of courses.

Does Study Leave allowance carry over from one year to the next?

The 30 days allowance and £600 funding do not carry over from one training year to the next (for example, from ST1 to ST2). The allowance for each post is proportional to the amount of training time spent in that post (for example a 6 month hospital post worked at 50% LTFT would have 7.5 days of study leave allowance and £150 of budget)

Can I get my travel and subsistence costs reimbursed?

Travel and subsistence costs are claimable if in line with the NES Study Leave Policy. The TPD will not normally approve funding for travel to a course where an equivalent course is available locally.

If you want to apply for a more distant course e.g., for personal reasons, you may still be eligible for study leave for the course fee. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Am I entitled to study leave for exam preparation?

A total of five days study leave will be approved for private study for AKT revision and five days for SCA preparation. The days do not need to be consecutive. This total is irrespective of the number of sittings at each exam. For example, if you used 5 study days for the 1st sitting of AKT, but then fail, you would have no more personal study leave to study for a second sitting.

Rather than routinely taking 5 days off for private exam study, consider whether this is the best way of preparing. Taking this time will detract from other educational opportunities available to you throughout your programme.

I am keen to act as the AiT representative at a meeting - do I need study leave for this?

The deanery supports AiT representation and attendance at NES/ Specialty Association/ Committee

meetings, as well as attendance at meetings of national importance e.g., BMA rep. RCGP rep. Study leave is not required for these activities - attendance as a trainee representative at NES meetings does not require study leave. For other meetings, you may apply for "Special Leave" to your employer - NES HR for primary care or Hospital HR if working there. Time spent on these meetings should be logged in your e-portfolio and should not be to the detriment of your training. You should get permission to attend from your ES / CS. Seven days a year is usually considered to be reasonable - beyond this there should be a discussion with your supervisor and TPD. It may be possible to apply for Special Leave, but this is limited in quantity. Excessive amounts of time taken off may result in extension to training time with alteration to your CCT date.

I have been asked to be part of a deanery quality management visit –do I need to take study leave for this?

If you are involved in a quality management visit this should come out of your study leave time. However, the deanery feels that trainee representatives on quality management visits should not be disadvantaged if they have exceeded their study leave limit, and special leave should be considered in this situation. It may be possible for 7 days of special leave to be granted for positions of national or international importance. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

I'd like to take study leave during a period when I'm not scheduled to work-is this possible?

You cannot receive time in lieu for a course that you attend when you are not scheduled to work. You can still apply for study leave for these courses if you are requesting funding.

Can I get study leave whilst on maternity/paternity or sickness leave? What about if I am out-of-programme?

If you are on Maternity Leave you have the option to use the Keeping-in-Touch (KIT) days for attending courses. You need to inform your TPD so that they can confirm the KIT day with HR for salary purposes. You don't need to apply for Study Leave in this situation unless you are asking for funding. Study Leave can only be approved once you have arranged the KIT day.