



Guideline on Educational Electives

Version control		
Document name	Guideline on Educational Electives	
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Author	Méabh Ní Bhroin	
Version	Version 1.0	
Approved	GPTAC	
Date	17 th June 2026	



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1.0 Purpose

This guideline outlines the process for undertaking an elective during GP training.

2.0 Scope

This guideline is intended for GP trainees, scheme directing teams, trainers and any facilitators involved in elective placement supervision.

This guideline does not apply to established region-specific placements contributing to service provision. Where such a placement is already established, a trainee can still apply for an elective provided the combined placements do not exceed educational leave entitlements.

This guideline does not apply to situations where trainees intend to take exceptional leave from the training programme to pursue clinical training or research. The reader is referred to the relevant policies and procedures.

3.0 Guideline Statement

3.1 Definition

An elective is a formally approved, time-limited educational placement undertaken by a trainee outside the prescribed core curriculum.

An elective provides the trainee with an opportunity to pursue additional learning in an area of clinical, academic, or research interest. Note that electives are supplementary to the core curriculum and must not supplant or disrupt core teaching and learning activities. Electives must be approved in advance by the GP training programme and completed in accordance with institutional, regulatory, and professional requirements.

Patient-facing placements are preferred, as they offer practical learning opportunities complimentary to the core curriculum and facilitate workplace-based assessment. Electives in research and medical education are also valid. Research should be directly applicable to Irish primary care and demonstrate an impact on patient care, practice organisation or population health.

Electives are a valid indication for educational leave. Trainees must submit an application for educational leave to undertake an elective.

3.2 Criteria

Electives should:

- Clearly contribute to clinical competence or scholarship
- Be relevant to General Practice
- Have clear learning objectives and outcomes
- Be of sufficient duration and workload to achieve those learning objectives
- Be suitably supervised and indemnified with appropriate governance in place to ensure patient safety

In addition, electives are subject to assessment as outlined in section 3.5 below

3.3 Types of Electives

3.3.1 Electives in clinical sites and services accredited for postgraduate medical training

Trainees can access a wide variety of inpatient and outpatient specialties in accredited HSE training sites. Examples include rotations in relevant medical specialties to which the trainee has not had exposure in their training journey to date such as rheumatology, palliative care, minor surgery, etc.

3.3.2 Electives in university departments of General Practice

Trainees can also access research, quality improvement or medical education opportunities through one of the academic university departments of General Practice in Ireland.

3.3.3 Electives in clinical sites and services not accredited for postgraduate medical training

Trainees can also access rotations in clinical sites and services not accredited for postgraduate medical training subject to the following criteria:

- Adequate supervision delivered by a named specialist in the area
- Adequate facilities, equipment, resources and patient caseload to achieve objective
- Compliance with patient safety: An appropriate governance structure for patient care must be in place to safeguard patient safety
- Relevant indemnity arrangements are in place

Examples include:

- HSE addiction services
- Irish Prison services
- Homeless charities such as SafetyNet and SPIRASI

- The Irish Family Planning Association

Where a trainee proposes to undertake a clinical elective in a facility not ordinarily used or accredited by the College for training purposes, the suitability of that placement may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such requests will be assessed in accordance with the accreditation criteria set out in this guideline. Where necessary, approval can be given in conjunction with the GP Training Directorate.

3.4 Trainee Eligibility

3.4.1 Competency progression recommendations

To be deemed eligible for an elective, trainees should be progressing as expected or faster than expected per their current CPC recommendation.

3.4.2 Stage of training

Applicants will typically be in year 4, but in exceptional cases applications from year 3 trainees may be considered where the trainee is progressing faster than expected.

3.5 Assessment

Electives are subject to assessment and must contribute to GPEP evidence of achieved competencies via WPBA, EPAs or structured written reflection and reports, with mid-placement and/or end-of-placement reports where appropriate.

3.6 Application Process

The trainee makes a proposal submission using the Application form on GPEP.

It is the trainee's responsibility to ensure the preliminary steps are completed prior to applying on GPEP.

3.6.1 Electives based in accredited sites or University departments

Such electives require endorsement from:

- Named supervisor for the proposed elective: the learning plan must be agreed to in advance.
- The trainer: this includes establishing whether sufficient educational leave is available to the trainee.
- The SDT: one ASD, preferably the mentor, and sign-off by the SD, in consultation with Directorate, if needed.
- Educational leave application requires approval from the primary care manager in the HSE.



- Applications for educational leave, accompanied by the relevant supporting documentation, are submitted by the trainee to the employer using HSE Form HR 108(p).

If the trainer and primary care manager approve the leave, the form is reviewed by the SDT and a decision is communicated in writing within 4 weeks. Approval can be withdrawn prior to commencement if the trainee is no longer considered to be progressing as expected/other unforeseen change in circumstances. This will be communicated by email.

3.6.2 Electives planned in non-accredited sites

In addition to the process outlined in 3.6.1 above, the trainee must provide evidence that the training site fulfils the criteria in 3.3.3 and include evidence in the GPEP application for the SDT to review.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Trainee	Confirm suitable supervisor, discuss application for elective with trainer and SDT including leave allowance, complete application form on GPEP, ensure indemnity in place. If site new, complete site accreditation checklist or research checklist if applicable, complete learning outcomes on GPEP, feedback to scheme.
Trainer	Review and approve/deny requests to pursue an elective. Advise on remaining educational leave entitlements.
SDT	Assess eligibility of trainee to pursue elective, approve/deny application, reply within 4 weeks, review outcomes.
Supervisor	Collaborate with trainee on learning outcomes, facilitate checklist completion where applicable, provide supervision, provide verbal and written feedback.
Irish College of GPs	Placement review every 4 years.
HSE	Certification on indemnity where appropriate, approve educational leave.



5.0 Related and Supporting Documentation

- [Educational leave policy](#)
- [Competency and progression committee process and rules of procedure](#) (see section 3.8)
- [HSE educational leave application form HR108\(p\)](#)
- [Standards for Clinical Audit, Quality Improvement and Research](#)
- [List of state authorities under the Clinical Indemnity Scheme](#)
- [Application form is via GPEP](#)
- Clinical placement checklist for non-accredited sites (Appendix A)
- Checklist for research placement (Appendix B)

6.0 Contact

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

gae.training@icgp.ie



Appendix A: Criteria checklist for accreditation of new elective placements

1. Educational Governance

- ☐ Named Educational Supervisor identified
- ☐ Defined learning objectives documented
- ☐ Mid-placement and end-placement review process documented
- ☐ Clear escalation pathway for trainee concerns

2. Structured Elective Programme

- ☐ Written elective description
- ☐ Weekly timetable available
- ☐ Clear clinical exposure defined
- ☐ Evidence that elective is educational (not service-driven)
- ☐ Defined scope of trainee responsibility

3. Clinical Governance & Patient Safety

- ☐ Incident reporting system discussed/documentated where appropriate
- ☐ Safeguarding/child protection policy accessible
- ☐ Prescribing governance framework
- ☐ Infection control policy
- ☐ Emergency equipment checks documented
- ☐ Indemnity confirmation
- ☐ Data protection/GDPR compliance

4. Facilities & Learning Environment

- ☐ Dedicated consulting room/area with adequate equipment
- ☐ IT access with training provided if required
- ☐ Access to clinical guidelines
- ☐ Teaching space
- ☐ Administrative support clarity

Appendix B: GP Training Research Elective Checklist

1. Project Overview

☐ Proposed Start Date: _____

☐ Proposed Completion Date: _____

Title of Research / Audit / QI Project: _____

Type of Project (tick one or more):

☐ Clinical Research

☐ Practice-Based Audit

☐ Quality Improvement Project

☐ Service Evaluation

☐ Systematic/Literature Review

☐ Qualitative Study

☐ Other: _____

☐ Brief Description (150–300 words attach)

2. Relevance to Irish General Practice

☐ Clearly relevant to Irish primary care

☐ Addresses an issue commonly encountered in GP

☐ Potential to improve patient care and/or practice systems

☐ Aligns with GP curriculum competencies

Details (if required):

3. Learning Objectives

☐ Clear educational objectives stated

☐ Develops evidence-based medicine skills

☐ Enhances critical appraisal ability

☐ Supports clinical governance/quality improvement learning

☐ Includes reflective learning component

4. Trainee Role and Participation

- ☐ Trainee has defined, active role
- ☐ Involved in study design
- ☐ Involved in data collection
- ☐ Involved in analysis/interpretation
- ☐ Involved in writing/report preparation
- ☐ Contribution proportionate to elective time

5. Supervision

- ☐ Named Supervisor: _____
- ☐ Regular supervision meetings planned
- ☐ Supervisor agrees to provide written feedback

6. Ethics and Governance

- ☐ Ethics approval required? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- ☐ If yes, approval obtained or application submitted
- ☐ GDPR compliance confirmed
- ☐ Patient confidentiality safeguards in place

7. Time Commitment

- ☐ Scope appropriate for elective duration
- ☐ Clinical duties not compromised
- ☐ Timeline attached
- ☐ Feasible completion plan

Estimated total hours: _____

8. Expected Outputs

- ☐ Written report for ePortfolio
- ☐ Presentation (local/national meeting)
- ☐ Poster submission
- ☐ Practice implementation plan
- ☐ Manuscript submission (if applicable)
- ☐ Audit cycle completed (if audit)



9. Expected completion deliverables:

- ☐ Reflection and Portfolio
- ☐ Structured reflection planned
- ☐ Plan for upload to ePortfolio

10. Risk Assessment

- ☐ No significant patient safety risk
- ☐ Data storage plan secure
- ☐ Indemnity considerations reviewed