

Educational leave guideline

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1.0 Purpose

A guideline that gives an overall approach to educational leave for GP trainees.

2.0 Scope

This guideline provides information and guidance on educational leave processes for scheme directing teams, trainers, HSE managers, and trainees enrolled on the National Specialist Training Programme in General Practice (hereafter “the Programme”). This guidance is not intended for doctors enrolled on other postgraduate training programmes.

2.1 Exceptional leave

Trainees may, from time to time, request exceptional leave from the programme to pursue a particular aim or interest. Such requests are more properly considered under the Exceptional Leave policy and are beyond the scope of this document.

2.2 Day release

For clarity, day release training is in-service training during normal working time, is not subject to educational leave provisions and is beyond the scope of this document.

3.0 Guideline statement

The guideline outlines general principles that should be considered when managing educational leave. This includes the common principle that educational leave should be:

- Taken in the context of the whole training programme; and
- Tailored to individual trainee needs.

3.1 Purpose of educational leave

Educational leave should:

- Enhance learning;
- Align with programme requirements;
- Consider the individual learning needs of the trainee, including CPC recommendations; and
- Be used to provide education and training required by the core curriculum but not easily acquired at day release or in the workplace

3.2 Context and responsibilities

Educational leave may be granted at the discretion of the employer under the terms of the NCHD contract as follows:

9 (k): Educational leave

i) The Employer may, taking account of the NCHD's medical education and training status, grant the NCHD up to a maximum of 18 working days (based on a 7.8 hour working day) per 6- month period to facilitate:

- (1) Attendance at courses, conferences, and educational events determined to be appropriate by the HSE, the recognised postgraduate training bodies and the Universities;
- (2) Study leave prior to an examination or repeat examination for higher degrees or diplomas determined to be appropriate by the HSE, the recognised postgraduate training bodies and the Universities;
- (3) Attendance at examinations determined to be appropriate by the HSE, the recognised postgraduate training bodies and the Universities;
- (4) Attendance at interviews within the Irish public health service appropriate to the NCHD's training / career pathway

ii) All educational leave must:

- (1) be relevant,
- (2) take account of service and rota needs,
- (3) be recommended by the supervising Consultant / Clinical Director and
- (4) be approved by the Employer in advance in line with the Employer's leave policy and with cognisance of the requirements of any specialist training / professional competence scheme the NCHD is participating in and related medical education and training requirements.

Educational leave is thus approved by the employer in a prospective way and taking account of service and rota needs.

The employer may in turn request guidance from the Programme regarding the appropriateness of requested educational leave as outlined in (i)(1), (i)(2), (i)(3) and (ii)(4) above.

The implementation of educational leave in the workplace (including timing and quantum) is also subject to agreements between employers (e.g. HSE) and NCHD representative bodies and unions (e.g. the Irish Medical Organisation) as may be updated from time to time.

3.3 Planning educational leave

Trainees should meet with their clinical supervisor early in each rotation to discuss and document the trainee's aspirations and learning needs and to plan educational leave during the rotation in a prospective manner.

Discussions should take account of the following:

- Individual learning needs of the trainee;
- Core training programme requirements;
- CPC recommendations;
- Service and rota needs.

Where questions arise regarding the appropriateness of educational leave proposed by trainees, clinical supervisors can seek guidance from the GP Training Programme via the relevant scheme directing team (SDT).

3.4 Applying for educational leave

Applications for educational leave, accompanied by the relevant supporting documentation, are submitted by the trainee to the employer using HSE Form HR 108(p). The form should be completed by the trainee and their line manager (usually the clinical supervisor or primary care manager) and submitted to the relevant HR department within the standard notice period. Further guidance is available [here](#).

3.5 Requests for educational leave which is generally deemed appropriate

The following are generally approved under the terms of the NCHD contract and rarely need to be discussed with the Programme:

- Mandatory HSE training e.g. Basic Life Support, early warning score training, hand hygiene
- Attendance at MICGP exams
- Study leave ahead of MICGP exam attempts
- Early GP exposure in years 1 and 2
- Attendance at interviews within the Irish public health service

3.5 Requests for educational leave which may be deemed appropriate

The following *may* be approved should they meet the criteria outlined in 3.1 above and are appropriate to the individual learning needs of the trainee as determined by the clinical supervisor (in consultation with the scheme CPC and / or scheme directing team as needed):

- Courses
- Conferences and educational events
- Attending specialist clinics or community placements

Course, conferences and other educational events must provide a clearly stated curricular outcome and there should be a documented discussion between the trainee and clinical supervisor about the clear need of the course / conference to meet curricular outcomes and individual trainee needs as outlined in 3.1 above. Clinical supervisors can seek guidance from the SDT when needed. Specialist clinics, community placements and other secondments may vary according to local scheme syllabi.

3.6 Requests for educational leave which are generally not deemed appropriate

The following are generally not considered appropriate reasons for educational leave:

- Non-MICGP postgraduate membership examinations;
- Educational activities that have no relevance to General Practice;
- Education and training already provided in the workplace or through the day release programme.

3.7 A note on diplomas, Masters' degrees and other postgraduate qualifications

Degrees and diplomas offered by recognised awarding institutions may provide opportunities for advanced learning for trainees who are seen to be progressing more rapidly than expected for their stage of training at Competency Progression Committee (CPC) review. Educational leave *may* be considered in this context as a part of prospective individual educational planning in conjunction with trainers and scheme directing teams.

It is important to note, however, that such courses are subordinate to core GP training activities, particularly experiential learning in the clinical learning environment, day release training, and preparation for MICGP exams.

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

Trainee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan educational leave in conjunction with clinical supervisors• Apply for educational leave in line with HSE processes
Clinical supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan educational leave in conjunction with trainees• Approve educational leave in conjunction with HSE HR• Seek clarification from the training programme where necessary
Scheme directing team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide guidance on educational leave pursuant with the recommendations of this guideline and considering individual trainee needs.
Competency and progression committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issue recommendations relating to trainee progression• Identify trainees requiring additional education and training• Identify trainees who may be offered advanced learning opportunities

5.0 Related and supporting documentation

- NCHD contract
- Trainee leave policy
- Exceptional leave policy

6.0 Contact

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