

Midlands GP Schools Study Leave Guidance



Revised Version	Revised Date	Reason for Revision	Approved by
Current Final_ver_May_2026	1.5.26	Revision of wording for sections 4 to further clarify no limitations to funding.	GP HoS

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1. Purpose and Scope

This guidance sets out the principles and procedures for the use of study leave by GP Specialty Registrars (Resident Doctors, RDs) in the Midlands region.

Study leave is designed to support RDs by enabling time away from scheduled duties and providing financial assistance for courses that align with their career goals and objectives, irrespective of their current post. The overarching aim is to ensure equitable access for all RDs, in line with the Enhancing Junior Doctors' Lives initiative. At the same time, there is a duty to use public funds responsibly.

The aim is to:

- Support equitable access to educational opportunities.
- Prioritise curriculum-aligned learning.
- Promote responsible use of public funding.
- Integrate national NHSE study leave principles.

RDs are strongly advised not to book or pay for any courses or educational packages until they have received formal approval. Failure to obtain prior approval may result in the individual being personally liable for the associated costs.

2. Principles of Study Leave

I. Relevance to NHS GP Role

Study leave activities must be directly relevant to the RD's current NHS GP clinical role or demonstrate potential relevance to future work within a **core** NHS GP role.

II. Contribution to Professional Development

Activities should enhance clinical knowledge, skills, or competencies that contribute meaningfully to high-quality patient care and professional growth within general practice.

III. Equity and Consistency

Access to study leave should be applied fairly, with consistent decision-making to ensure transparency and equal opportunities across all trainees.

IV. Value for the NHS

Study leave must represent appropriate use of NHS resources, with priority given to activities that provide clear benefit to both the RD and the service.

3. Study Leave Entitlement

- 30 days per year for full-time RDs (pro rata for LTFT).
- This entitlement includes time for mandatory structured educational programmes (e.g., half- or whole-day release organised by the GPSTP). This accounts for 15 days, which will be automatically deducted (on a pro rata basis) from the annual allowance. Separate applications are **not** required for these mandatory elements. Should the RD need to claim travel expenses, this can be done through a study leave claim using a 'zero day' entry, meaning no study leave time is deducted."
- Attendance at the East Midlands Leadership & Management Programme must also be taken from within this 30-day entitlement and **does** require a separate application if used.
- Study leave cannot be used retrospectively.
- Private study for the purpose of exam preparation is limited to 5 days/training year, with a recommendation of 2 days per exam sitting. (Study leave for the examination day itself must be applied for separately via Accent.)
- Further guidance around time-in-lieu can be found in the regional study leave policy

4. Categories of Study Leave

All applications must be supported by a Personal Development Plan entry in the e-portfolio. This should include evidence that the activity has been discussed with and approved by the Educational Supervisor, with a clear explanation of why the course is required for the resident doctor's professional development beyond the training already provided at GP programme level.

Category I: Mandatory Curriculum-Based - requires ES Approved

(Aligns with 'Curriculum Required' category within regional Accent approval process)

Please note that if the total cost associated with any single claim exceeds £1,000, including all course fees, travel, and subsistence expenses, additional TPD authorisation will be required. Note this is not a limit but a threshold for further approval.

COURSE/ACTIVITY	NOTES
Regional Teaching/WDR/HDR	Mandatory. No funding needed. Deducted from study leave allowance
AKT Course	Guidance of two courses over whole of training & RCGP accredited courses are preferred
SCA Courses	Guidance of two courses over whole of training & RCGP accredited courses are preferred

GP Knowledge Update Course	Guidance that RCGP, Red Whale and NB Medical are preferred providers. Guidance one course per ST training year
BLS (Adult + Paeds)	Guidance one course per calendar year
Safeguarding Level 3 (Child + Adult)	Guidance one course every three calendar years
Fourteen Fish SCA Plus Package	
Fourteen Fish AKT Package	
NHSE Leadership & Management Programme Phase 1	RD is responsible for applying to and securing a place on the course prior to submitting a study leave application
NHSE Leadership and Management Programme Phase 2	
NHSE Leadership and Management Programme Phase 3	

National RCGP Conference	Guidance to attend once over whole of training either in ST2 or ST3
Regional HEFT conference	Guidance that attendance prioritised to those within a HEFT-focused training rotation or with a health equity learning need identified in PDP
Category II: Discretionary activities- Requires ES + TPD Approval (Aligns with ‘Discretionary’ category within regional Accent approval process) These educational activities would supplement areas of the GP curriculum that may otherwise be difficult to access through routine training, such as Child Health Surveillance or Veterans Health. They require GP Training Programme Director (TPD) and ES approval in addition to a PDP entry.	
NOTES It is expected that any such targeted course or intervention will have been identified through an educational prescription or through documented discussion with the relevant Training Programme Director or Associate Dean. It is anticipated the proposed educational activity, including travel and accommodation, would incur a cost under £1000.	

Category III: Discretionary activities including International Leave- Requires ES + TPD + AD Approval

(Aligns with 'Discretionary' category within regional Accent approval process)

This category is intended for resident doctors who are making good progress in their training, typically those at ST3 who have successfully completed both the AKT and SCA examinations. Courses and activities in this category represent 'Extended Development' - optional learning that sits beyond the requirements of the core GP curriculum. They are designed to support the longer-term professional development of the individual and, where possible, to bring wider benefit to the healthcare system.

Where the course involves the acquisition of practical skills, such as minor surgery or joint injections, RDs will be expected to set out how they plan to use and maintain these competencies in their future practice. Where there is no realistic plan for regular application, the study leave request may not be approved. This reflects the well recognised principle that practical skills require ongoing use to be maintained effectively.

NOTES

This category applies to:

a study leave event where the total cost (including travel and accommodation) exceeds £1000.

a potential claim where costs of travel and accommodation exceed 50% of the claim.

Courses in this category represent extended development and are discretionary, sitting beyond the mandatory curriculum. They may be considered once the resident doctor has passed both the AKT and SCA, provided that workplace-based assessment requirements are progressing appropriately and the application is supported by the relevant TPD or Associate Dean (AD).

If further clarification or guidance is required, the AD or Head of the GP School may be consulted.

Other examples of Category III educational courses/topics include:

Joint injection training

Advanced leadership & management training

Medical Education/Teaching skills

Funding will not be approved for educational activities scheduled to take place or continue after the end of GP training (i.e. beyond the CCT date).

In certain cases, only a proportion of the claim may be approved if costs are considered excessive and/or poor value for money.

5. Courses/Activities Not Funded

Certain courses and activities are not eligible for study leave funding. These are typically those that fall outside the requirements of GP training, are not aligned with the GP curriculum, or where equivalent learning is available through other means.

NOT FUNDED

NOTES

Diplomas & Certificates (DRCOG, DCH, etc.) Outside requirements of GP training

Revision courses for non-GP exams
(e.g. MRCP)

Not GP curriculum aligned

Advanced Life Support (ALS, ILS, APLS)	Trust funded if needed for post
Private Interview Preparation Courses	Outside requirements of GP training
Smear taker e-learning	Outside requirements of GP training
Botox/Fillers/Aesthetic courses	Not aligned to NHS General Practice
E-portfolio, RCGP membership, registration	
Subscriptions to journals (paper or online)	
Examination fees	
Printing costs for presenting posters/publications	
Software subscriptions	
Claims for which a receipt cannot be produced	

Retrospective study leaves applications

Educational activities scheduled to take place
or continue beyond the CCT date

6. Study Leave Planning and Application Process

Study leave should be discussed with your Educational Supervisor as part of a regular ES meeting, ideally with at least six months' notice to allow for effective planning.

All applications must be submitted through the regional Accent system a minimum of six weeks before the proposed leave date.

Each application should include a full cost breakdown covering fees, travel, and accommodation, and must demonstrate alignment with the overall educational and clinical balance for the week.

Applications for online or virtual learning activities are welcomed and will be considered on the same basis as in-person courses. Where the activity is delivered remotely, RDs should still apply through the usual process. Travel and accommodation costs would not normally be expected for virtual events.

Retrospective applications will not be considered.

Approval Requirements

Approver	Cat I	Cat II	Cat III / International
Rota Approver (GP Practice Manager or Secondary Care Rota Coordinator)	✓	✓	✓
Educational Supervisor	✓	✓	✓

Training Programme Director		✓	✓
Associate Dean / Head of School			✓

7. Travel, Accommodation and Subsistence

Resident doctors and supervisors should ensure that any claim represents value for money and reasonable use of funding.

Attendance at courses/conferences should be taken as close to the base of the individual as possible.

Mileage reimbursed at £0.30/mile.

Accommodation: max £120/night (outside London), max £150/night (London)

Subsistence: Up to £20/24 hours if overnight stay is required.

8. Study Leave During Additional Training Time (following an Outcome 3)

RDs still have annual study leave allowance during a period of additional training time.

Approval will be prioritised for courses relevant to the educational needs of the RD as detailed on the ARCP form.

9. Study Leave and Statutory leave

As described in clause 43 of the NHS doctors and dentists in training Terms and Conditions

(2016): “Where a doctor takes parental leave their entitlement to study leave continues and this may be taken during ‘keeping in touch’ days or will otherwise accrue to be taken at a later date”.

The accrual of study leave will depend on the requirements of the curriculum for the individual’s stage of training and to ensure the needs of service delivery can safely be met.

10. Study Leave and Sick leave

Study leave would not usually be permitted during periods of sick leave. It may be appropriate for trainees to access ‘SuppoRTT’ funding/opportunities in preparation for returning from prolonged periods away from training.

11. Overseas/International study leave

International study leave is not an entitlement and, in general, should usually only be contemplated by exception. International study leave should occur when the learning outcomes from the course/conference are not available in the UK (joint societies with a UK and Ireland remit for these purposes are considered as UK) and where there is a clearly demonstrated educational need and a defined benefit to both the RD and the NHS.

Study leave requests for overseas events will require approval from the Head of School or Primary Care Dean. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that the proposed activity is relevant to the GP curriculum, with a demonstrable and significant educational benefit to GP training.

For approved international study leave applications, NHSE will consider funding either the full cost of the course/conference fees or the full cost of economy travel and accommodation whichever is the lower amount. When the course/conference fee is waived by the course provider, NHSE will consider funding the full cost of economy travel

and accommodation. For accommodation, in alignment with the agreed maximum rate for study budget claims within the UK, the overnight rate should not exceed £150 per night.

All associated costs must be declared transparently at the time of application.

The following costs will not be re-imbursed for international study leave:

- Mileage
- Parking
- Subsistence
- Travel visas
- Taxis

Miscellaneous additional costs

International study leave cannot be claimed retrospectively, except in truly exceptional circumstances.

12. Reflection and Portfolio

A reflective log entry must be made after each approved educational activity detailing learning outcomes, link to the relevant PDP and application to practice.

13. Appeals

The process for appealing decisions related to study leave applications is outlined in the NHSE Midlands Study Leave Policy.