



POLICY DOCUMENT

Study Leave Guidelines

Foundation, General Practice, Hospital Specialty and Hospital Dental Trainees

2024 (Version 1.2)
QMG

Policy Review Schedule

Date first Approved by HSTC: August 2013
 Last Approved by QMG: September 2024
 Date of Next Review: August 2025

Policy Owner: Senior Education Manager

Amendment Overview

| Version | Date | Pages | Comments | Actioned |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 2000 – 1.0 (01.03.00) to 1.3 (2018) Details of revisions archived | | | | Denise Hughes |
| 2018 – 1.4 | 17/08/2018 | 13 | Revisions to content | Ian Steele |
| 2019 – 1.5 | 05/02/2019 | 13 | Revisions to content | Emma Dale |
| 2019- 1.6 | 11/06/2019 | 16 | Exam expenses OOP; Foundation and Dental revisions; GP separate policy referenced: SMC APPROVED | Denise Hughes |
| 2019- 1.7 | 26/06/2019 | 16 | Additional comments from SMC incorporated | Denise Hughes |
| 2019- 1.8 | 29/11/2019 | 8 | Overnight accommodation rates amended following Board approval QMG Approved | Emma Dale |
| 2020-1.9 | July 2020 | 18 | Reference to study leave for online events. Process for Study leave approval for F2s entering Specialty Training included. Revisions to OOP. QMG Approved | Denise Hughes |
| 2022 2.0 | July 2022 | 13 | Reference to local courses. | Emma Dale |
| 2022 2.1 | September 2022 | 9 / 10 | Update of Study Leave Allowance for F2's. Funded area updated for attendance at conferences/ presentations | Karen Moore |
| 2023 2.2 | July 2023 | | Update of S/L Time guidance and SLWG recommendations | Emma Dale |
| 2024 1.0 | July 2024 | | Revision to GP | D Hughes |
| 2024 1.1 | July 2024 | | Amended at SMC Education Forum | D Hughes |
| 2024 1.2 | Sep 2024 | | Amended at SMC Education Forum | D Hughes |

Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Policy Review Schedule..... | 2 |
| Role of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency..... | 3 |
| 1 Introduction | 4 |
| 2 Study Leave – Time | 5 |
| 3 Study Leave Entitlement – Funding | 6 |
| 3.1 Foundation Year 1 Trainees | 7 |
| 3.2 Foundation Year 2 Trainees | 8 |
| 3.3 GP Specialty Trainees..... | 9 |
| 3.3.1 Mandatory Courses..... | 11 |
| 3.3.2 Non- Mandatory Learning Events | 11 |
| 3.4 Hospital Specialty Trainees and Dental Specialty Trainees | 12 |
| 3.4.1 Mandatory Courses..... | 12 |
| 3.4.2 Non-Mandatory Learning Events | 13 |
| 3.4.3 Examination attendance expenses | 14 |
| 3.5 Dental Core Training | 14 |
| 4 Application Procedure | 14 |
| 4.1 Appeals Process | 15 |
| 5 Targeted Trainee Support Courses | 15 |
| 6 Less Than Full Time Trainees (LTFT)..... | 16 |
| 7 Locum Appointments for Service (LAS)..... | 16 |
| 8 Trainees on Statutory leave | 16 |
| 8.1 Maternity Leave | 16 |
| 8.2 Sick Leave | 16 |
| 9.2 Research Fellows..... | 17 |

Role of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency

[Role of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency - Northern Ireland Medical & Dental Training Agency \(nimdta.gov.uk\)](http://nimdta.gov.uk)

1 Introduction

Study leave is designed to support education and training for postgraduate trainees that cannot otherwise be acquired in the work place setting.

The requirements for, and terms of study leave, need to be considered within the context of the Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook for Hospital Medical and Dental Staff.

These guidelines set out the principles that underpin NIMDTA's decisions to consider approved applications for study leave and any associated funding. Information and guidance on study leave will be provided during School induction processes.

The study leave year runs for 12 months from the first Wednesday in August for Medical trainees and the first Wednesday in September for Dental trainees. Leave days and funding cannot be carried over from one year to another. All Medical and Dental trainees, with the exception of Medical Foundation Year 1 trainees are entitled to up to 30 days study leave.

Trainees should not be expected to do on-call whilst on study leave or the night before study leave as it diminishes the value of study leave to the trainee.

There are two elements to study leave; time and funding.

The specific day/time that is being requested by the trainee needs to be approved by the educational placement provider and the relevant NIMDTA Educator will ensure that time requested does not exceed maximum allowance for the training year. Funding is provided via NIMDTA in accordance with study leave guidance below. Study leave days may be approved with or without funding.

It is expected that trainees will document and reflect on the learning and training that they have received through approved study leave in their portfolio.

Trainees will not normally be approved to receive study leave time or funding to attend courses which are not relevant to their current training programme. The trainee may choose to use annual leave for this purpose.

All requests for study leave, regardless of whether costs are involved, must be made **prospectively** via the online form [Apply for Study Leave \(nimdta.gov.uk\)](https://nimdta.gov.uk)

Study leave should be applied for from the hospital and unit in which the trainee is working in at the time of the course (educational placement provider).

Applications for study leave should be made at least 6 weeks in advance to the educational placement provider and at least 4 weeks in advance to NIMDTA. **If the application is not made prospectively then no funding will be provided and study leave time will not be approved. If a course takes place on a weekend or on a trainee's days off an application is still required prospectively if the trainee desires to be considered for funding towards the event.**

All trainees are required to obtain prospective approval for Study Leave outside of NIMDTA Formal Education Programmes. This approval consists of the authorised approver in the HSC Trust to approve the request for leave (expected 6 weeks' notice) and approval of the relevant

NIMDTA educational lead/lead educator (Training Programme Director (TPD) or Head of School) to confirm if NIMDTA funding is granted (expected 4 weeks' notice). Trainees must indicate on the application form that they have obtained authorisation from the HSC approver for the study leave before submitting the request to NIMDTA. Trainees may be asked to provide evidence of this authorisation (e.g. email confirmation from the HSC approver) as part of a verification process.

Where the usual HSC Trust approver is not available the trainee must obtain support from the HSC Trust approver who is deputising in their absence. Where there is an unavoidable delay in obtaining the HSC Trust approval the trainee should contact NIMDTA to inform the Study Leave Department that they are in the process of making an application for leave and funding. This cannot be left until after the event has taken place.

Opportunities to attend events that have only become available at short period before the event (e.g. due to a cancelled place) must also be applied for before the event and will not be considered retrospectively. If there is time to plan to attend the event it is expected there will be time to submit an application for leave and funding.

The proposed use of study leave must be relevant to the individual's educational needs and appropriate to his or her experience. Local courses (within NI) should be attended where possible. If a local course is held within the training year and an alternative course outside NI is applied for, funding will normally only be provided to the level of the local course, other than in exceptional circumstances. Fees, travelling expenses, subsistence allowance should be agreed in advance.

2 Study Leave – Time

The time allocation for study leave relates to the number of working days missed. The maximum that can be approved in a year includes time set aside for NIMDTA Formal Education Programmes organised by the Foundation or Specialty School. Weekends should only be counted when they coincide with a duty period.

Study leave days may be granted with or without funding. It may not always be possible for an educational placement provider to facilitate requests for study leave due to the needs of the service. NIMDTA should be informed if educational placement providers are unable to facilitate study leave requests. Where trainees are granted study leave on non-working days, Trusts will aim to facilitate Time off in Lieu (TOIL) by exception. This must be agreed and approved in advance to be taken at a mutually agreeable time, subject to the exigencies of the service.

Ideally trainees should not take study leave in the first two weeks after the start of any new placement as this is a crucial period of induction to a new workplace.

Study leave time **is required** for the following:

1. FLiGHT Training events for Foundation* year 2 trainees and PDP modules for Hospital Specialty trainees.
2. NIMDTA Specialty-specific Formal Education Programmes* which take the trainee away from provision of service. This will include trainees working in the HSC Trust

where the courses are delivered if they are out of service for the duration of the training day or half day.

3. Examination preparation courses, training events or conferences (eg ALS, ATLS, APLS, BSS, cCRISP, IMPACT) or other mandatory/highly recommended training events or conferences
4. Leave to undertake private study e.g. to prepare for an examination or to write up research. Any private study leave requested to prepare for an examination should be within a month of the examination (up to 5 days study leave for private study can be approved for one examination). This should not be approved for periods of more than five working days and should only be granted within the exigencies of the service. Private study leave should serve a very specific defined purpose and its aims and objectives should be discussed and agreed between trainer and trainee
5. To undertake specialty examinations during Foundation Year 2. F2 doctors can apply for up to a maximum of 5 days private study leave on one occasion only provided the F2 doctor gives evidence of entry to a recognised postgraduate exam. This is at the discretion of the Foundation School Director.
6. Private study leave is not applicable for preparation for Specialty Recruitment processes. This includes the assessment which forms part of the selection process.

It is recognised that following the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, alternative methods for participating in the types of educational events described above have had to be developed. There has been a move to a greater proportion of study leave time being used to participate in on line events, rather than traveling to face to face events within NI or elsewhere. Trainees can apply to use study leave days to participate in such on line educational events.

**Study leave days to attend Foundation FLiGHT modules, GP Regional and Locality training days or Hospital Specialty specific Formal Education Programmes organised by NIMDTA are already incorporated as an integral part of most training programmes. These leave days are part of the trainee study leave entitlement however trainees do not need to apply to NIMDTA for leave to attend these events. Trainees do need to ensure, through discussion and arrangements with their Clinical Supervisor and colleagues, that there is appropriate clinical cover organised in their workplace during the time they are at these educational events.*

Study leave time **is not required** for the following:

1. Leave for Specialty trainees to sit examinations necessary for the career advancement of the trainee in his/her chosen specialty. This applies only to the day(s) that the exam sitting takes place. Any additional days for travel will need to be requested as annual leave.
2. Leave to attend interviews.
3. Local teaching sessions within the HSC Trust in which the trainee is based including Audit and Clinical Governance activities.
4. Attendance at Specialty Recruitment Processes.

3 Study Leave Entitlement – Funding

While NIMDTA seeks to be flexible and to respond to the needs of individuals, there are not the financial resources to support attendance at all the training events that a trainee may

desire. Courses which are not relevant to the programme the trainee is working/training in will not be funded.

Funding for study leave is limited and will be prioritised according to whether a trainee applies for educational events that are mandatory, highly recommended or desirable.

If the application for Study Leave is not made prospectively to NIMDTA then no funding will be provided and study leave time will not be approved.

If a course takes place on a weekend or on a trainee's days off an application is still required prospectively if the trainee desires to be considered for funding towards the event.

Where an educational event is on line, trainees must make the application for funding prior to registering and paying for the event to ensure the cost will be reimbursed.

If an application has been approved with funding, **claim forms must be submitted within 3 months of the event taking place.** Claim forms received after this time period will not be paid. Where the request was for an online event a claim form can be submitted with proof of payment in advance of or within 3 months of the event taking place.

From 1 January 2020, trainees are entitled to claim up to £120 per night towards overnight accommodation and subsistence for courses and events taking place outside London. Trainees can claim up to £150 towards overnight accommodation and subsistence for events in the London area. This also applies to examination attendance expenses for Specialty Trainees.

If an application form is received during a current training year requesting funding or leave for the following training year, the allowance will be taken from the relevant academic year budget relevant to the event taking place.

3.1 Foundation Year 1 Trainees

It is a mandatory requirement for Foundation Year 1 trainees (F1s) to attend NIMDTA's Regional Induction Day and Induction events provided by their educational placement provider. F1 doctors are not entitled to study leave, although should be facilitated within working hours to attend organised teaching sessions within their HSC Trust. F1 trainees should have a minimum of 2 hours per week of protected teaching on curriculum mandated topics.

All Foundation doctors (F1 and F2) can request study leave funding towards poster/oral presentations at an external conference and must include the following information with the application:

- Poster/oral presentation slides or abstract
- Copy of conference programme with your name / presentation section highlighted
- Letter or email correspondence confirming your acceptance to present at this conference
- Confirmation in writing that no funding is available from any other source
- Inclusion of the NIMDTA and/or the NIFS logo on your presentation slides or poster

- Upon submission of the above requirements, please make sure that all receipts and necessary expenses are attached to your claim

(Please note a maximum grant of £250 will be considered, for presentations ***within the UK & Ireland only***)

3.2 Foundation Year 2 Trainees

F2 doctors are entitled to 30 days Study Leave which is utilised as follows:

The 30 days Study Leave is utilised as follows:

- 10 Days = Regional FLiGHT Programme (essential)
- 8 Days = GP Weekly Teaching Programme (if in a GP Placement)

These days are dedicated and do not require a study leave application

An additional 2 Days can be used for ALS / e-ALS as detailed below however you are required to submit a Study Leave application for this course

- 2 Days = ALS / e-ALS (optional)

The remainder of Study Leave may be used for:

- Training Course
- Educational Conference/Meeting
- Poster/Oral presentation
- Private Study Leave
- Taster Module
- Other events/training courses

All the above requests require a Study Leave Application submitted at least 4 weeks in advance. Attendance for postgraduate exams is not included in the trainee's study leave allowance.

Study leave time **is not required** for leave to attend interviews or postgraduate examinations.

The maximum funding allowance for ALS course is £300. (Only one attempt is funded during foundation training).

All Foundation doctors (F1 and F2) can request study leave funding towards poster/oral presentations at an external conference and must include the following information with the application:

- Poster/oral presentation slides or abstract
- Copy of conference programme with your name / presentation section highlighted
- Letter or email correspondence confirming your acceptance to present at this conference
- Confirmation in writing that no funding is available from any other source
- Inclusion of the NIMDTA and/or the NIFS logo on your presentation slides or poster

- Upon submission of the above requirements, please make sure that all receipts and necessary expenses are attached to your claim

(Please note a maximum grant of £250 will be considered, for presentations ***within the UK & Ireland only***)

NIMDTA F2 trainees may choose to self-fund courses or sit postgraduate examinations during the F2 year. If an event is applied for and approved prospectively while in F2 and the trainee then enters a NIMDTA GP or Hospital Specialty Training programme **immediately following** Foundation, they will be eligible for reimbursement in line with the funding guidance for specialty trainees. This will also apply to trainees who can demonstrate that they had applied for Specialty Training immediately following Foundation but were unsuccessful. This must be applied for during academic year following completion of foundation training.

Funding is not allocated during the Foundation programme but the trainee is asked to outline costs and submit receipts post event. If the trainee then enters NIMDTA specialty training programme directly after completing Foundation they can submit a claim for reimbursement within 3 months of starting the programme.

The maximum amount any trainee can be reimbursed after they start specialty training for courses completed during their F2 year is £1250, with the maximum of £750 for any one highly recommended course. An exception would be for courses recognised by NIMDTA as mandatory for the programme they have entered post F2. Accommodation costs will be reimbursed in line with the study leave guidance.

The event does not need to be specific or mandatory to the new specialty training programme to receive funding within the limits outlined above.

3.3 GP Specialty Trainees

GP Trainees are entitled to a maximum of 30 days study leave in a year. The GP core curriculum is covered through courses (Regional & Locality) which are organised by the Deanery. In the St2 & St3 years some of the 30 day allowance is taken up by attendance at Regional and Locality training days advertised on the NIMDTA Course Manager website. Please note trainees do not need to request study leave to attend these days as they are compulsory and attendance is monitored.

There are some occasions when a GP Trainee may wish to apply for additional study leave.

Application forms must be approved by; the Clinical Supervisor who is their Consultant when in a hospital post or the GP Trainer when in a General Practice post. The GP Trainer cannot approve the application for study leave when a Trainee is in a hospital post.

All applications for study leave will be considered on an individual basis, bearing in mind the trainee's priority is to achieve a CCT in General Practice.

The General Practice department reports to the GP Specialty Training Committee on any study leave applications which have not been approved.

All trainees are advised to ensure that they are covered through their indemnity provider for any study leave opportunities they may undertake.

The following study leave days are provided by the Deanery during the GP Training Programme:

- St1 Regional & Locality days – 12 days*
Meeting with Educational Supervisors - 2 ½ days (5 sessions).
- St2 Regional & Locality days – 25 days*
Meeting with Educational Supervisors whilst in hospital post: 2 days (4 sessions).
- St3 Regional & Locality days – 25 days*
AKT – 1 day
CSA – 1 day

*The number of days may vary.

The following is approved for Study Leave:

Claims for travel and subsistence connected to Regional and Locality training days may be approved. Trainees do not need to make an application for study leave to attend the Regional or Locality days.

The core GP curriculum is covered by courses organised by the Deanery, therefore any requests for attendance at external courses must offer learning opportunities not provided by the NIMDTA GP programme. Study leave is usually prioritised to areas which will contribute significantly to service delivery e.g. Family Planning training, or a specific exam e.g. Diploma in Mental Health, Diploma in Child Health etc.

Provided the request is approved Trainees may be supported with;

- Study Leave
- Course fees
- Travel / subsistence costs*

Trainees are also entitled to apply for leave and travel and subsistence to sit GP examinations

*If booking flights/ travel arrangements please remember Trainees must take advantage of the most economical options. • There are limitations to the amount which can be reclaimed outlined on the Trainee expenses form. • Normally only one overnight stay will be approved for the night prior to an exam held outside Northern Ireland. If it is not possible to travel home after the exam consideration may be given to the request.

The following is not supported/approved for Study Leave

- Examination fees
- Taking time off to prepare for an exam. Trainees in General Practice posts already have protected time in their weekly timetable and opportunities at locality days for self-directed learning.
- Courses outside Northern Ireland if they are available locally.

- Training which should be provided by the educational placement provided eg Trust as part of the post for example CPR / ALS training will not be supported.

Private study leave is not applicable for the GP Applied Knowledge Test (AKT)

3.3.1 Mandatory Courses

- Applied knowledge test (AKT)
- Recorded Consultation Assessment (RCA)
- Simulated Consultation Assessment (SCA)

Please note as exam fees are not funded, travel & subsistence costs only are funded and conditions apply. Please see Trainee Expense Form for more information.

3.3.2 Non- Mandatory Learning Events

A grant of up to £750 may be awarded for Non-Mandatory Highly Recommended courses or events. Trainees will not receive any funding if they have already received greater than £1250 funding in the training year. Out of sync trainees in their final year of training will receive pro-rata funding reflective of the duration of training remaining within that academic year.

The following are examples of Highly Recommended courses for GP Trainees:

- Certificate in Essential Palliative Care, Princess Alice Hospice
- Diploma in Elderly Medicine
- Diploma in Child Health
- Diploma in Respiratory/ Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Diploma in Diabetes
- Diploma in Family Planning (DFSRH)
- Certificate in Sexual and Reproductive Health
- eKA in Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare
- Diploma Dermatology
- Diploma in Mental Health
- Diploma in Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Diploma Sports Medicine
- Certificate in Dermoscopy
- Certificate in Clinical Education
- Diploma in Medical Education
- Exam Preparation Courses

This list is not exhaustive. Consideration will also be given for study leave applications to support other key areas of work in General Practice for example Elective Care Reform and Integrated Care Partnership work.

Other opportunities for study leave

In some circumstances a GP Trainer may feel that a Trainee would benefit from attendance at clinics in specific specialties or at another GP training practice (for example to view another computer system or different type of practice). On these occasions the Trainee can apply for study leave. It is up to the GP Trainer and Trainee to organise the visit.

In addition a trainee who has succeeded in having a piece of work, e.g. a poster accepted for a conference; delivering a workshop at a conference, is likely to be supported within available resources.

Study leave & the ePortfolio

GP trainees are encouraged to reference relevant study leave opportunities on their ePortfolio as a Learning Log or PDP entry.

3.4 Hospital Specialty Trainees and Dental Specialty Trainees

Hospital Specialty trainees are entitled to up to £1250 per year towards approved events. Funding which remains unused at the end of the training year cannot be carried forward to the next training year.

3.4.1 Mandatory Courses

Mandatory courses are those courses which are clearly identified in the College or Faculty curriculum, decision aid or guidelines for award of CCT and will normally be funded in full by NIMDTA. Receipt of funding for a Mandatory course will impact on what funding is available for other educational events for that trainee in the training year. Where a number of Mandatory courses are required over the training programme, the trainees should plan ahead to ensure the courses are spread over a number of training years.

Trainees should be clear what Mandatory courses will be required prior to the start of the training year. A Mandatory event will normally be funded in full unless the trainee will exceed their maximum allocation or the request is retrospective. In this instance the previously received funding for the Non-Mandatory events would then be subtracted from the overall costs associated with the Mandatory event.

Where a trainee has very large Mandatory funding requirements (in excess of £1250 in any training year) this will result in a reduction in the funding available to them for Non-Mandatory events in the other years of their training. This will be identified to the trainees in the relevant specialties at the start of the programme.

Where a course costs in excess of £2000 it may be necessary to share the cost of this between the trainee, NIMDTA and the employing HSC Trust/Host Organisation. These requirements will be identified to the trainees in the relevant specialties at the start of the programme.

Trainees should seek to access the most cost-effective course to meet their curriculum requirements and within their study leave budget, for example courses provided through the Professional Development Programme.

For Hospital Specialty Trainees a list of mandatory training courses by specialty is available at [Apply for Study Leave \(nimdta.gov.uk\)](http://nimdta.gov.uk)

If a trainee has received £1250 or more during the training year, they will be required to fund further Non-Mandatory events themselves.

3.4.2 Non-Mandatory Learning Events

Non-Mandatory Learning Events will be classified as either Highly Recommended or Desirable.

A maximum of £1250 will be awarded in a training year towards the cost of Non-Mandatory learning events. Trainees will not receive any funding if they have had greater than £1250 funding towards Mandatory courses in the training year. Non-Mandatory learning events will have been endorsed by the Lead Educator for the Specialty. Non-Mandatory events may include external examination courses where there is no suitable locally provided course. A Mandatory course costing more than £1250 may not be funded in full if the trainee has not planned for this and has already received funding for Non-Mandatory events. The previously received funding for the Non-Mandatory event would then be subtracted from the cost of the Mandatory course, if the combined cost is greater than £1250.

Highly Recommended Courses: A grant of up to £750 may be awarded per event. Trainees will not receive any funding if they have received greater than £1250 funding towards Mandatory courses and Desirable courses in the training year. Highly Recommended courses will have been categorised by the Lead Educator for the Specialty and endorsed by the relevant College Curriculum. Trainees will be informed during the application process that funding received for this type of course may impact on the amount being reimbursed for Mandatory courses in the training year.

Recognised Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas may also be classified as Highly Recommended events, in which case up to £750 is available towards the cost of these where trainees do not need their funding for Mandatory events or other specialty specific events during that training year. Out of sync trainees in their final year of training will receive pro-rata funding reflective of the duration of training remaining within that academic year.

Desirable Courses: A grant of up to £250 may be awarded per event. Trainees will not receive any funding if they have received greater than £1250 funding towards Mandatory courses and Highly Recommended courses in the training year. Desirable courses will have been categorised by the Lead Educator for the Specialty. Trainees will be informed during the application process that funding received for this type of course may impact on the amount being reimbursed for Mandatory courses in the training year.

3.4.3 Examination attendance expenses

Specialty Trainees can apply for funding for travel and subsistence to sit an examination (for up to a maximum of two attempts) but will not receive the examination fee. This also applies to trainees who are Out of Programme. Individual cases for additional travel and subsistence may need to be considered following discussion at Trainee Review Group. If a local examination sitting is taking place this should be utilised. If a trainee sits an examination outside NI when a local sitting was available, an explanation must be provided and the amount being received may be lower than was requested. The funding to attend for exams is not included in the trainee's training year study leave allowance.

3.5 Dental Core Training

It is a mandatory requirement for Dental core trainees to attend NIMDTA's Regional Induction Course and Induction events run by their employing Trust. There are 13 mandatory education days organised by NIMDTA, these days are dedicated and do not require a study leave application.

The remaining Study Leave may be used for:

- Training Course
- Educational Conference/ Meeting
- Poster/ Oral presentation
- Private Study Leave
- Taster Module
- Other events/training courses

All the above requests require a Study Leave Application submitted at least 6 weeks in advance as per application procedure in section 4. Please refer to section 3.4 under Hospital Specialty Trainees and Dental Specialty Trainees for funding allowance.

4 Application Procedure

- **All** requests for study leave, regardless of whether costs are involved, must be made prospectively on the relevant application form (F2, GP, hospital specialty or hospital dental training) which is available by download from NIMDTA website home page [Apply for Study Leave \(nimdta.gov.uk\)](https://nimdta.gov.uk) From August 2023 this is an online application form.
- **All** applications for study leave must demonstrate authorisation by an HSC Trust Approver for Hospital Posts (e.g. Clinical Supervisor, Educational Supervisor or Clinical Director). Educational Supervisors will be able to advise on the local arrangements. Trainees will be asked to provide the name and contact details of the approver on the application form. Trainees may be required to provide evidence of this authorisation (eg email confirmation) as part of a verification process.

- Trainees who wish to apply for funding only (without leave from work) do not need to have the days authorised by the HSC Trust Approver but still need to submit the request prospectively to NIMDTA to be considered for funding.
- Applications must be submitted via the online form [Apply for Study Leave \(nimdta.gov.uk\)](https://nimdta.gov.uk) not later than 4 weeks before the date of proposed leave.
- Before approval is granted applications will normally be reviewed at NIMDTA within 5 working days and all will be reviewed within 15 working days. For each School the person responsible for reviewing applications will have been identified to the Study Leave department. A second reviewer will be identified for those periods when the first reviewer is unavailable to assess applications.
- Receipts and expense claims should not be submitted along with an application.
- Claim forms will be issued on receipt of approval and must be returned to NIMDTA via email to business.management@hscni.net within 3 months of the event. All receipts must be attached.
- Payment will normally be made within 30 days of receipt of the claim form and supporting documentation.
- Where hospital specialty trainees are allocated to a training post attached to another Specialty School (e.g. ACCS trainee in an IMT post), the application for leave will be approved in the HSC Trust in the normal way and will go to the parent School of the trainee for NIMDTA decisions about leave. Any funding required will be from the trainee's parent School.

4.1 Appeals Process

Where a trainee does not agree with the decision about leave or funding relating to study leave they can submit a request for review within 5 working days of the decision with additional supporting information to studyleave.nimdta@hscni.net.

This request for review should normally be received prior to the start of the study leave period.

The appeal process involves an independent review by another senior member of the department not involved in the initial decision. The outcome of this review will be final and there will be no further avenue for appeal.

5 Targeted Trainee Support Courses

A targeted trainee support course will normally have been identified to address an individual trainee's specific training need through the ARCP process after an unsatisfactory outcome. The trainee will have been discussed at Trainee Review Group and will have met with the Associate Dean for Professional Support & Wellbeing. Funding for the course will require Associate Postgraduate Dean and Head of Department approval and will be funded separately from other courses for the trainee.

6 Less Than Full Time Trainees (LTFT)

Less Than Full Time Training (LTFT) trainees will receive the same funding allocation as full time trainees however are entitled to an annual study leave time allowance 'pro-rata' to their sessional commitments. On occasion it may be necessary to extend the study leave time allowance in any one year depending on the individual's training requirements. However, the allowance over the entire training programme will remain proportional to the sessional commitment.

7 Locum Appointments for Service (LAS)

Locum Appointments for Service (LAS) are not eligible for study leave time or funding.

8 Trainees on Statutory leave

8.1 Maternity Leave

As part of NIMDTA's VALUED strategy, trainees on maternity leave have the same access to study leave funding as other trainees, should they wish to avail of this. Trainees are required to apply prospectively by submitting an application form. Under their Contract of Employment trainees on maternity leave can take up to ten days' 'Keeping in Touch Days' (KIT) for which they will be paid. Trainees must contact Single Lead Employer and Medical HR in their educational placement provider in advance of applying for study leave if they wish to request KIT days. General Practice trainees are required to email gpspecialtytraining.nimdt@hscni.net if they wish to request KIT days.

8.2 Sick Leave

Trainees who are unfit for work should not attend approved study leave events without the authorisation from the Director of Medical Education, who may require supportive evidence from occupational health prior to making a decision.

9 Out of Programme Trainees

Trainees who are Out of Programme (OOP) for Training, are eligible to apply for study leave using the guidelines above. Trainees should note that this will only be granted when the organisation funding your placement will not be providing access to a study leave budget. Trainees who are OOP for Research are entitled to access their study leave budget during their final year of research in order to undertake mandatory training courses only. Trainees should note that any funding provided will be deducted from their study leave allowance in the next academic year.

Trainees who are OOP for Experience are not eligible to apply for study leave funding from the budget of that specialty. Any study leave during this period must be funded by the trainee or the organisation hosting the research / clinical experience. As indicated under section 3.5, OOP Trainees can apply for funding for travel and subsistence to sit an examination (for up to a maximum of two attempts) but will not receive the examination fee.

9.1 ADEPT Clinical Leadership Fellows

Trainees who are undertaking an ADEPT Clinical Leadership Fellowship are facilitated to attend events integral to the programme. This will include day release to attend the Leadership and Development programme in the HSC Leadership Centre, FMLM events and the NICON Conference. Additional time for events which would normally be considered as study leave must be authorised by project supervisors in host organisations.

9.2 Clinical Academic Trainees

Research Supervisors should ensure that funding for research by ACF/ACL trainees includes an element for relevant study leave, including presentation of papers at meetings.

10 Period of Grace

Hospital Specialty Trainees who have obtained CCT and Dental Specialty Trainees who have obtained CCST and are in a Period of Grace are not entitled to study leave funding as the training period will have been completed. The Period of Grace is a time of employment (maximum 6 months) to enable trained doctors and dentists to seek employment, substantive or locum, as a consultant.