TRUST POLICY

STUDY LEAVE - CONSULTANTS, SAS DOCTORS AND HOSPITAL PRACTITIONERS

The review date for this policy has been extended by 18 months (until July 2017) until the new Consultant Contract is released. Please continue to follow this guidance until the release of the updated policy.

Any hard copy of this document is only assured to be accurate on the date printed. The most up to date version is available on the Trust Policy Site.

All document profile details are recorded on the last page.

All documents must be reviewed by the last day of the month shown under “review date”, or before this if changes occur in the meantime.

FAST FIND:
For study leave entitlements and information on professional leave, see section 5.
For information on the criteria for granting study/professional leave, see section 6.

DOCUMENT OVERVIEW:

- The Trust attaches the greatest importance to the continuing education and training of its professional staff and values education as an integral part of delivering excellent care.

- This policy will provide guidance for Consultants, Staff Associate Grade (SAS) Doctors and Hospital Practitioners within the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust about the requirements and processes applying to study/professional leave.

This document may be made available to the public and persons outside of the Trust as part of the Trust's compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
STUDY LEAVE – CONSULTANTS, SAS DOCTORS AND HOSPITAL PRACTITIONERS

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STUDY LEAVE – CONSULTANTS, SAS DOCTORS AND HOSPITAL PRACTITIONERS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Trust attaches the greatest importance to the continuing education and training of its professional staff and values education as an integral part of delivering excellent care. This policy will provide guidance for Consultants, Staff Associate Grade (SAS) Doctors and Hospital Practitioners within the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust about the requirements and processes applying to study/professional leave.

2. DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word/Term</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Leave</td>
<td>Leave which includes study (usually, but not exclusively or necessarily on a course), research, teaching, examining or taking examinations, visiting clinics and attending professional conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Leave</td>
<td>Professional Leave is a sub-set of Study Leave and is included in the Study Leave allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional leave with pay</td>
<td>Does not include expenses. See full list in Section 5 of this document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of interest</td>
<td>Any situation where a person’s involvement in an activity has an actual, potential or perceived effect of influencing the interest, financial or otherwise, of the person, or another individual, business or organisation with whom that person has a familiar, formal relationship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. PURPOSE

This policy will ensure the following:

- That the contractual obligation provided by the Terms and Conditions of Service for Consultants 2003, including pre 2003 Consultant contract, SAS Doctors and Hospital Practitioners are fulfilled
- That the arrangements for approving study/professional leave covered by the policy are clearly outlined, efficient, timely, transparent and non-discriminatory
- That Consultants are enabled to maintain their personal competence and meet the requirements of medical revalidation
- That an efficient process is in place to enable Consultants to apply for and receive approval for study/professional leave in a timely manner
- That the Trust’s patients and their needs are at the forefront of decision-making about a doctor’s absence from work
- That the requirements of the Trust’s Equality Strategy and Policy are met, which provides that no employee shall receive less favourable treatment than any other, on the grounds of: ‘gender, sexual orientation, marital status, responsibility for dependants, disability, race, national origin, age, religion, political or trade union affiliations, HIV status or socio-economic background, part-time or fixed term status’

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post/Group</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>• Approving study leave for the Medical Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of HR and OD</td>
<td>• Review and maintain this document in conjunction with the Local Negotiating Committee in line with Trust Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Service Delivery</td>
<td>• Hear appeals from Chiefs of Service who have raised relevant grievances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Director</td>
<td>• Approving study leave for Chiefs of Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources (HR) team</td>
<td>• Advise on the interpretation of this policy in accordance with national terms and conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide information for the support of medical revalidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review of this policy in conjunction with the Local Medical Negotiating Committee in line with Trust policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post/Group</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post/Group Details</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Divisional Chief of Service            | • Approving study or professional leave for Specialty Directors  
• Hear appeals from specialty medical staff who have raised relevant grievances  
• Ensuring divisional heads consider applications for professional/study leave in excess of 10 days per year when required |
| Educational Tutors/ programme leaders  | • Claiming leave for essential meetings called by the Severn Deanery or Bristol University                                                                                                                                 |
| Specialty Directors                    | • Specialty Directors, or their nominated representative, are responsible for approving study leave requests and checking against guidance. Formal approval should not take longer than 10 days from the date of application  
• Annual review of professional development plans with Medical and Dental staff as part of the appraisal process  
• Assuring that clinicians have arranged suitable cover  
• Ensuring that the service impact can be managed effectively  
• Managing resources effectively to cover the provision of study and professional leave |
| Individual Member of Senior Medical Staff | • Must give a minimum of 8 weeks’ notice for all leave requests. Exceptional cases will always be considered as appropriate on an individual basis  
• Must request leave using E-Leave (where implemented), or complete and submit a study leave request form (prior to implementation), 8 weeks prior to the leave being taken. Specialty Directors’ leave will be approved by the relevant Chief of Service or their nominated senior colleague. 8 weeks notice will be taken from the date of application. Leave is not authorized until the Specialty Director or nominated Lead Clinician/General Manager has electronically authorized the leave or signed the leave form. Senior Medical Staff are reminded that it is advisable not to book conferences or make other arrangements before leave is authorised  
• Are responsible for arranging appropriate cover, where relevant, with their colleagues. Due regard should be given to arrangements for covering essential clinical needs when planning leave, e.g. cancer referrals and individual patient care requirements. If the Senior Medical Staff member fails to arrange appropriate cover, they are required to notify their Specialty Director at the earliest opportunity for an appropriate solution. The Specialty Director will contact the Medical Staffing Manager for advice if necessary |
| General Managers                       | • Discuss leave arrangements with clinicians during capacity planning to enable effective scheduling of resources                                                                                                                                 |

5. STUDY LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

The consultant contract provides, for a full time consultant, 30 days in a period of 3 years (normally 10 days per year), which includes off-duty days falling within the period of leave. The terms and conditions of service make no distinction between professional and study leave; 30 days is the contracted number of days. The Trust recognises that a doctor working 4 Direct Clinical Care (DCC) sessions or more is entitled to the full allocation. Doctors working less than 4 DCCs will receive a pro rata amount to a full time doctor.

Study leave/professional leave should be distributed across DCC and Supporting Professional Activities (SPA) time in a reasonably proportionate manner and off duty days falling with the period of leave must also count as professional and study leave.

Professional Leave is a sub-set of Study Leave

5.1 Activities regarded as professional leave with pay (but without expenses)

It is recognised that some professional activities benefit both the individual’s professional development and the wider NHS. Leave to accommodate these activities can be taken within the study leave allocation once the requirements of revalidation have been met.

The following activities are regarded as professional leave with pay. The expectation is that expenses will be paid by the organising body:

- Duties as an officer, committee member or member of a working party of a Royal College, Faculty, Professional or Scientific Society or NICE
- Examining for Royal College, University or other body
- Attendance as a College Assessor at an Advisory Appointments Committee inside/outside Region.
- Attendance at officially constituted bodies giving advice to the Department of Health
- Duties as a member of a Medical Defence Society
- Attendance at British or International Standards Committees
- Duties as a member of the Medical Research Council
- Membership of Editorial Board of a Scientific Journal
- Clinical Trials Working Party (should be taken as annual leave if remunerated by external body)
- Duties in relation to postgraduate educational activities outside the Trust
- Lecturing outside the Trust
- Visits to hospitals outside the Trust for the purpose of assessing training facilities
- In connection with responsibilities as Regional Educational Adviser
- Attendance at External Appointments Committees for Medical Staff outside Gloucestershire Hospitals
- Attendance at External Appeals Committee
- Attendance at court as an expert witness, where there is no payment or where any payment for the attendance is made to the Trust. Individuals who receive personal income for this activity are expected to take annual leave.

Expenses would be claimed directly from the receiving organisation (not the Trust)

Particular needs relating to remediation linked with revalidation are covered in the Trust Remediation Policy.

5.2 Activities not deemed to constitute study leave

The following activities are regarded as official duties and therefore study leave or professional leave need not be requested but the activity should be reflected in the job plan:

- Consultant to Consultant meetings related to patient care.
- Meetings with local commissioners
- Local service, delivery and improvement meetings
- Specialist Network Meetings e.g. Cancer, Cardiology
- In house mandatory training (see mandatory training matrix on the intranet)
- Attendance at a Coroner’s inquest or court if required by the Trust
- Meetings in connection with management of patients across Trust boundaries
- Attendance at interviews for Doctors in Training

The Trust has formal agreements to deliver teaching and examining activity with the University of Bristol and the Severn Institute; leave must be granted where funded backfill is provided. Such activity must be reflected in the annual job plan and does not constitute professional leave.

5.3 Working in the Kambia Government Hospital

In 2008 it was agreed by the Trust Board that GHNHSFT would offer 2 members of staff per annum the opportunity to take up to 4 weeks leave to offer support on a voluntary basis at the Kambia Government Hospital. Staff could be from a range of disciplines including medicine, nursing, finance, management, human resources and estates or medical engineering.

Indirect costs associated with offering staff the opportunity of taking leave based on up to 2 members of staff in Kambia for up to 4 weeks per annum will be incurred by GHNHSFT. It was proposed that staff released would be paid at their usual rate. Staff would be expected to take half of the period requested as annual leave. The remainder would be approved as paid authorised leave. The Kambia Appeal will fund accommodation and arrange for food, but the cost of travel and food would need to be met by the individual.

In addition to the authorised leave any time spent in Kambia can be considered as study leave as long as this is agreed with the relevant specialty director, is consistent with the individual’s development plan agreed at appraisal and that all mandatory training has been completed.
6. CRITERIA FOR GRANTING STUDY LEAVE

The Specialty Director/Chief of Service will normally authorise requests for study/professional leave within 10 working days, and will ensure the following:

- That study/professional leave arrangements are discussed with their General Manager during capacity planning to enable effective scheduling of activity
- That the leave requested is appropriate against the individual’s contractual obligations and the need to effectively manage the impact on the service
- That essential Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is funded as a first priority, and payment of costs will be subject to available funding
- That they are satisfied that the purpose of the leave is of importance to the Trust or the wider NHS
- That they are assured that the clinician has arranged suitable cover, which does not include locums
- That where a practitioner is employed by the Trust and another organisation that the correct proportion of funding is allocated
- That when granting professional leave, colleagues are not prevented from taking annual leave or essential study leave. Where approval of professional leave has been given a significant period in advance, approval may have to be withdrawn no later than 4 weeks before the planned professional leave to satisfy this requirement

From time to time, the following may also apply:
- A study day in lieu may be taken at a mutually agreed time where an individual is expected to attend a course during their day(s) off; this should be agreed in advance
- Study leave funding may be authorised to be used in alternative ways to achieve learning, for instance to purchase professional journals, audiovisual material, distance or online learning materials
- Where it is to the benefit of a specialty or division to approve study/professional leave beyond 10 days per annum, Chiefs of Service may consult with the Medical Director to determine whether the leave is in the wider interest of the Trust

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL CLINICIANS

The Trust expects that individual clinicians will adhere to the following in relation to study and/or professional leave:

- That suitable prospective cover will be arranged within existing resources, i.e. without locums
- That at least 8 week’s notice is given for any leave which impacts on direct clinical care, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Retrospective applications will not be approved and expenses will not be funded
- That all applications and claims for expenses are appropriately completed and submitted
- That any requirements for regular professional leave are agreed with their Specialty Director and incorporated into the annual job plan
- That any sponsorship from commercial organisations complies with the Trust’s Standing Financial Instructions and HSG(93)5 Standards of Business Conduct for NHS staff
- That any conflict of interest with any organisation involved in their study/professional leave is declared to the Specialty Director
- That they fund their own updating if granted leave for other purposes such as sabbaticals or careers and ensuring this is completed prior to return to work

8. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

The Trust’s financial provision for study leave is subject to the following limitations:

- Course Fees to a total of £3000 can be claimed in any 3 year period, with no more than £1200 to be claimed in any one year.
- Travel expenses reimbursed at the level of standard return rail fare or public transport rate, currently 24p mile for private car drivers
- Travel expenses other than rail or car mileage where this is proven to be a cheaper alternative, e.g. air travel in the UK.
- Overseas travel expenses will not be paid, only expenses to and from port of entry/departure will be paid
- Accommodation - Bed and breakfast at £75 per night (£100 for London)
- Meal allowance £25 per 24 hour period excluding breakfast
- Incidental expenses, such as parking, tube fares, etc, are eligible
- Non-commercial accommodation £25
- Claims must be submitted within a maximum of 3 months from the study leave date

All expenditure must be verified according to the Trust's Business Travel Policy.

9. RECORD KEEPING

- Study leave records must be maintained on E-Leave (where implemented) where they will be available for review by the Chief of Service, Specialty Director, Specialty General Manager, Clinical Leads and Operational Managers.
- Where E-Leave is not implemented, other electronic or paper annual leave records must be maintained for review.

10. RESOLVING DISPUTES

In the event of any dispute about the authorisation of study or professional leave, it is expected in most cases that the clinicians will be able to resolve this between themselves in a professional manner. However, the Trust’s Grievance Procedure may be invoked where an individual considers that this is the best way to resolve any outstanding issue.

11. TRAINING

There is no specific training linked to the use of this policy.

12. MONITORING OF COMPLIANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (objective to be measured)</th>
<th>Monitoring methodology</th>
<th>Lead responsible</th>
<th>Timescales</th>
<th>Reporting arrangements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of and compliance with this policy</td>
<td>• Specialty Directors will receive updates on the contents of this policy within the last 24 months; • Documentary evidence of active management of Doctor’s Study/Professional leave • Checks on study leave decisions and any challenges. In the event of shortfalls, the divisional manager and HR will work with departmental managers to produce an action plan which may include the following: • Additional training for the Specialty Director; • A review of departmental management processes; • A review of the number of individuals within the department taking Study/Professional Leave</td>
<td>Divisional Managers</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>To Chiefs of Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing results of the monitoring exercise</td>
<td>• Organisational report to be produced by the HR department to capture themes and reasons for non-compliance and make</td>
<td>HR</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>To Divisional Leads and Chiefs of Service</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>recommendations for improvements</td>
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