



Study Leave Policy

Resident Doctors and Dentists in Training

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1. Introduction

This policy aims to ensure that the General Medical Council's (GMC) [Promoting Excellence: Standards for Medical Education and Training \(2015\)](#), or equivalent, are met. These standards require that:

R3.12 Doctors in training must be able to take study leave appropriate to their curriculum or training programme, to the maximum time permitted in their terms and conditions of service.

This policy is underpinned by HEIW's 'Expectations Agreement' with Local Education Providers (LEPs) for the provision of postgraduate medical (including General Practice) and dental education and training.

2. Definitions & abbreviations

CODI – HEIW led digital system for the management of Resident Doctors and Postgraduate Professionals across NHS Wales.

CT – Core Resident

DFT – Dental Foundation Resident

DCT – Dental Core Resident

FT – Foundation Resident

GPST – General Practice Specialty Resident

HEIW – Health Education and Improvement Wales

LEP – Local Education Provider (Health Board & Trust) delivering education and training.

NWSSP – NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership the single lead employing organisation in Wales

Resident - Fully qualified medical practitioners in postgraduate training

RD&DIT – Resident Doctors and Dentists in Training

ST – Specialty Resident

3. Review of the Policy

This policy is intended as a transition policy for year 1 of the Resident Doctor Contract reform for implementation between 1st April 2026 and 3rd August 2027. It will be reviewed in April 2027 for implementation in August 2027 or earlier if applicable.

When the policy is reviewed, consultation will be sought from Local Education Providers, HEIW representatives, NWSSP representatives, RD&DIT and their representatives including BMA Cymru.

4. Scope of the Policy

The policy applies to doctors and dentists entitled to Study Leave within HEIW as defined in Section 5: Eligibility.

Attendance at the following are **not** counted against the annual Study Leave allowance

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- Bleep-free teaching time within the Health Board/Trust in which the resident is based
- Progress meetings with educators
- Regional/local Core Curriculum/Learning Programmes (with the exception of the GP structured educational programme for those in GP placements, including induction)
- Educational Development time
- Statutory training courses (including any local departmental training) required by employers/hosts.
- Specialty induction/bootcamp sessions and Specialty mandated HEIW delivered training.
- Involvement in NHS activities such as quality improvement, audit, risk management and clinical governance activities intrinsic to employment in the NHS.
- Meetings with HEIW's Professional Support Unit should be treated as any other health appointment (Occupational Health, GP etc) and RD&DITs should be enabled to attend.
- Professional leave including interviews for NHS appointments.

Study Leave, as defined in this policy, covers both time taken and funding requirements for undertaking Study Leave.

5. Principles of Study Leave

The main uses of Study Leave will be for educational development opportunities designed to gain competences defined in each curriculum. Study Leave should:

- a. Enhance clinical skills, education and training.
- b. Be planned as far in advance as possible, as an integral part of the education and training process.
- c. Provide education and training not easily acquired in the everyday clinical setting.
- d. Support the delivery of curriculum outcomes.
- e. Be equitable across the Medical Education Centres and other Local Education Providers.

RD&DITs should not be contacted whilst on approved Study Leave.

6. Eligibility

RD&DITs (including Less Than Full Time RD&DITs) who are eligible for Study Leave are as follows:

- Medical Foundation resident doctors
- Core resident doctors (CT1, CT2, CT3 and CT4)
- Dental Core residents (DCT), Year 2 and above
- General Practice Registrars in hospital and practice posts (GPST 1/2/3)
- Specialty resident doctors (ST1 – ST8)
- Specialty resident dentists
- Academic Clinical Fellow / Academic Clinical Lecturer posts
- Fixed Term Specialty Training Appointments (FTSTA)
- Locum Appointments for Training (LAT)
- Wales Clinical Academic Track (WCAT) residents

The following RD&DITs are **not** eligible for Study Leave under the terms and conditions of this policy:

- Dental Foundation Residents (DF1) (exists as study days in their programme of training)
- Dental Core Residents (DCT), Year 1 (exists as study days in their programme of training)
- Locum Appointments for Service (LAS)
- RD&DITs on out-of-programme (OOP) experiences

RD&DITs appointed to HEIW training programmes that rotate to Health Boards/Trusts/Deaneries outside HEIW should continue to follow this study leave policy.

7. Entitlement

7.1. Time

Each RD&DIT has an annual entitlement to Study Leave time and funding.

Medical Foundation Year 1 residents are entitled to 15 days study leave and Foundation Year 2 residents entitled to 30 days. Further details of how study leave can be used can be found in the [Foundation School Guide](#).

Core and Specialty RD&DITs and (Dental Core Residents Year 2 & 3 and Dental Specialty Residents) are entitled to 30 days of Study Leave per year.

GPSTs in GP posts are reminded that a significant proportion of their 30 days' study leave is taken up by half-day release. Further details are available in the GP Study Leave guidance Appendix 1.

Flexible (part time) (formerly known as LTFT) - RD&DITs who are working flexible (part time) will be allocated Study Leave time on a pro rata basis but will receive the full year funding allocation. Where a flexible (part time) RD&DIT is required to undertake a specific training course required by the curriculum, which exceeds the pro rata entitlement to study and /or professional leave, the host will make arrangements for additional study leave to be taken, provided that this can be done while ensuring safe delivery of services.

Parental Leave - RD&DITs on parental leave continue to be entitled to take Study Leave, within their allowance, during their parental leave, this may be taken during 'keeping in touch' days or will otherwise accrue to be taken at a later date. This is a matter of personal preference for the RD&DIT and in no circumstances should the RD&DIT be explicitly asked to take Study Leave during their parental leave.

Fixed Term Appointments - RD&DITs in Fixed Term Specialty Training Appointments (FTSTAs) and Locum Appointments for Training (LATs) who are employed for more than three months are entitled to Study Leave on a pro rata basis.

Sickness Absence - In the event that booked and approved Study Leave coincides with a period of sickness absence, the RD&DIT should consult the NHS All-Wales Sickness Policy and seek advice from NWSSP and within the LEP in which they are based.

7.2. Time off in lieu

Time taken for Study leave counts as working time so should normally be taken on rostered working days; this includes, online training which can be completed at a time convenient to the RD&DIT.

However, if it is necessary to complete training on a non-working day (e.g. weekend or rostered day off) then a day off in lieu should be granted.

Time off in lieu must be included within the Study Leave application and RD&DITs must agree the lieu day with their Educational Supervisor and a service manager e.g. rota co-ordinator, medical personnel, practice manager if in a practice setting etc at the time of applying for the Study Leave.

The lieu day should be taken within a reasonable timeframe of the Study Leave. This may be before or after the Study Leave.

The Educational Supervisor and the RD&DIT have a responsibility to ensure that the RD&DIT does not breach their contractual requirement on hours worked or the provisions of the European Working Time Directive.

The lieu day must be taken prior to rotation to a different Health Board as time off in lieu cannot be carried forward to a RD&DIT's next placement.

7.3. Examinations

Leave to sit examinations is permitted for those necessary to the career advancement of the RD&DIT in their chosen specialty.

Examination fees are not reimbursed from the Study Leave allocation.

Medical Foundation doctors in training are not permitted to take Study Leave to prepare for specialist examinations.

7.4. Private Study

Leave for private study is allowed for all RD&DITs above Foundation grade. This is typically limited to a maximum of five days within the training year, with the exception of private study for examination preparation where five days per exam sitting is permitted (within the overall limit of 30 days' study leave annually).

No expenses are paid for private study even if leave is granted.

7.5. Online Training

Online training may be accessed either as standalone courses or to deliver the theoretical aspects in preparation for a practical course.

When requesting Study Leave to complete online training, RD&DITs should provide evidence of the indicative duration of the course as part of their Study Leave application, along with evidence of the cost of the course.

Following completion of online training, when claims for reimbursement of online study expenses are submitted these should be accompanied by confirmation of the amount of time actually taken to complete the course submitted.

In the case of online training that can be undertaken at any time, RD&DITs are advised to complete training on a scheduled working day and to request the appropriate Study Leave time.

Any time required for compulsory pre-reading or e-learning for a course can be claimed as study leave as part of the course and should not be considered private study.

7.6. Other Paid Employment

No other paid employment or remunerative work can be undertaken during any period of Study Leave: infringement of this rule is a disciplinary offence.

7.7. Financial Support

The Study Leave budget amount made available is detailed as follows:

Foundation Year 1 residents do not have access to a study leave budget.

Academic F1 residents will continue to be able to access £250 and Foundation Year 2 residents will continue to be able to access the £480 made available. At this point, no confirmation has been made to indicate that these values would be subject to uplifts annually and would have to be discussed in partnership at MDBG.

For those other RD&DITs in programme from 1st April 2026 to August 2026 an increased amount will be added to their available budget to a maximum of £233.33 (this figure will be pro-rata'd where applicable as outlined in this policy).

From August 2026 an increased study leave budget amount of £1,000 will be made available per year, this figure will be pro-rata'd where applicable as outlined in this policy. Regular uplifts will be issued aligned to yet to be agreed measures of inflation.

A RD&DIT's Study Leave funding entitlement will be aggregated across a twelve month 'training year' period and calculated based upon a RD&DIT's rotation start date (usually August but will vary depending on programme).

RD&DITs are unable to use their Study Leave budget to claim for exam fees, professional registrations, Portfolio fees, books, or equipment.

RD&DITs are eligible to utilise their Study Leave funding at any point during the individual's defined training year regardless of the LEP in which they are based. However, applications for Study Leave time can only be approved by the designated approver(s) for the post in which the Study Leave will be undertaken.

Any particular limits on the financial allocation of the Study Leave budget, for example the amount top-sliced to provide specialty All-Wales training days, must be specified in the study guidelines of a HEIW School responsible for a training programme.

Out of programme experience - Study leave for residents whilst out of programme (OOP) will not be supported financially as per the [HEIW OOP policy](#). The study leave allocation prior to the OOP will continue to roll-over during this period.

7.8. Funding roll-over arrangements

Following agreement, as part of the 2026 Resident contract reform, a roll-over arrangement of any unused personal study leave budget into the subsequent training year will take place annually aligned to the duration of the training programme.

This roll over arrangement only applies to study leave funding.

The study leave allocation will be updated in line with the residents annual training year (usually August but this will differ in the case as of individuals starting the programme in February or other times of the year).

This rollover arrangement only applies to RD&DITs who are staying in the same training programme in Wales.

Personal Study Leave allowances can be viewed on the CODI platform. If this information is not available, or considered to be incorrect, RD&DITs should contact their local Medical Education Manager in the first instance.

8. Application Guidelines

All applications for Study Leave must be submitted through the CODI database.

Training for use of CODI will be provided at LEP level.

All requests for Study Leave (including requests for Study Leave time only and whether a course a RD&DIT wishes to attend is face-to-face or online) must be submitted via CODI at least six weeks before the leave is required.

Requests for Study Leave 'funding only' must be submitted via CODI. To avoid confusion for approvers and avoid possible delay, RD&DITs should enter '0' in the 'number of days' field in CODI and include a brief explanation in the 'comments' field.

Retrospective or late applications will not be considered unless in extreme circumstances, and if patient care is not compromised the leave may be granted.

An approval decision, which includes the degree of financial support, rests with the Educational Supervisor and Medical Education Manager (or designated leave approver) (or HEIW for GP registrars in practice posts).

All Study Leave requests must be approved by the designated leave approvers within one calendar month of the Study Leave request being submitted CODI.

(Monthly reports may be requested by HEIW detailing outstanding Study Leave claims outside the acceptable timescale to monitor compliance.)

Claims for reimbursement of course expenses can be submitted at the point of expense. All claims for approved Study Leave expenses must be made within three months of the date the Study Leave took place.

If an individual receives reimbursement in advance for study leave but is subsequently unable to attend, it is incumbent upon RD&DIT to notify the local Medical Education team who will manage each case individually.

9. Approval Process

Study Leave must be agreed in advance to avoid disruption to services, and it must be supported and approved by a RD&DIT's Educational or Clinical Supervisor. In certain cases this may be escalated to the Training/Foundation Programme Director for advice and guidance.

Authorisation of Study Leave is based on satisfaction of all the following five criteria:

1. **Availability:** the RD&DIT can be released from their normal place of work to attend the requested Study Leave.
2. **Relevance:** approved Study Leave must be relevant to the RD&DIT's educational needs, appropriate to their experience and supportive to the training programme which the RD&DIT is undertaking.
3. **Eligibility:** that the RD&DIT has sufficient remaining Study Leave time to cover the duration of the requested activity.
4. **Funding:** that the RD&DIT has sufficient unallocated personal funding allowance, within the defined limits, to cover the costs of the activity (or the RD&DIT has agreed to self-fund and has indicated this on the application form).
5. **Learning Agreement:** that an approved learning agreement or equivalent consideration of RD&DIT learning needs has been provided to and considered with the relevant Educational or Clinical Supervisor.

10. Course Fees and Expenses

RD&DITs need to be aware that the cost of courses can vary considerably and not all courses a RD&DIT may wish to attend will be identified as a training need, or a feasible option within funding limitations.

In accordance with HEIW and LEP financial regulations, the following costs incurred for Study Leave will be considered for payment:

- Approved registration or course fees.
- Travel and subsistence expenses if no suitable courses are available locally; specifically, standard class train and coach fares and economy internal (UK) air fares.
- Mileage expenses for cars, passengers and pedal cycles, payable according to the LEP/NWSSP policy for claims up until 1st August 2026 and thereafter using rates as set out in the NHS Terms and Conditions Handbook (Sections 17 and 18).

Study Leave funding will only be granted in exceptional circumstances for overseas courses or conferences, according to the Health Board/Trust policy on expense claims.

11. Management of the Study Leave Budget

For resident doctors, oversight of the Study Leave budget will be managed by the Medical Education Managers and HEIW for GPSTs in practice posts and WCAT residents.

For Dental residents (DCT2, DCT3 and Dental StRs) the Study Leave budget will be managed by the employing Health Board/Trust and not the Medical Education Manager.

Those responsible for managing the Study Leave budget must ensure that individual Study Leave decisions are recorded via CODI. For quality control, they should work with the CODI team in HEIW to report on the number of applications approved/not approved, reasons for non-approval, budget spent, whether approved Study Leave was actually taken and reasons for approved Study Leave not being taken.

Actual expenses claimed for Study Leave must be recorded on the CODI database by the Medical Education Centre, (HEIW staff for GP registrars and leave approver for Dental). Details of Study Leave expenses should be made available to HEIW on request in line with financial accountability.

12. Appeals Procedure

A RD&DIT who considers that their request for Study Leave is unreasonably refused has the right of appeal.

The RD&DIT should inform their Training/Foundation Programme Director of any Study Leave time or funding applied for that is refused, together with the reason for the refusal.

The RD&DIT and the TPD and ES must first jointly attempt to resolve the issues at a local level. If the matter cannot be resolved then the RD&DIT is able to escalate the concern to HEIW.

A RD&DIT should submit their appeal using the 'Notification of Study Leave Appeal' form (Appendix 2) clearly stating the reason(s) for the appeal and including any evidence that may support the appeal process. It is the RD&DIT's responsibility to ensure the completed form is submitted to heiw.appeals@wales.nhs.uk within 10 working days of the decision to refuse Study Leave being communicated to the RD&DIT.

An independent Appeals Panel will review all documentation submitted within 15 working days of notification of appeal.

The arrangement of an Appeals Panel will be directed by HEIW

The Appeals Panel will comprise two of the following members:

- i. Head of School/HEIW representative

- ii. The local designated Medical Education Manager from the LEP in which the appeal originated.
- iii. A Senior Manager from within HEIW not responsible for overseeing the training programme

The Appeals Panel may meet via virtual collaboration rather than a physical meeting.

The Appeals Panel will consider the information submitted on the form and the appellant is not required to attend.

The decision of the panel and the reasons for making that decision, will be confirmed in writing to the RD&DIT within five working days of the Appeals Panel decision. The decision of the panel is final.

APPENDIX 1 GP Residents Study Leave Guide

This guide explains what Study Leave GP residents are entitled to and how it should be applied. It supports the NHS Wales Study Leave Policy and outlines what qualifies as appropriate use of Study Leave, helping GP residents, GP trainers, and administrators apply the policy consistently.

GP Residents Study Leave Entitlement

This section explains how Study Leave entitlement is structured within GP specialty training and clarifies the number of sessions allocated to each placement type.

GP Residents in Hospital posts

GP residents in a **6-month** hospital placement are entitled to 30 sessions of Study Leave, 10 of which are already incorporated into the Half Day Release. Therefore, a total of 20 Study Leave sessions remain for courses, to write up research etc.

When GP residents are in a hospital post, Postgraduate Centre Administrators are expected to keep a record of the number of sessions that GP residents request to take off for Study Leave.

Study Leave must be relevant to the resident's educational needs, appropriate to their experience, and supportive of the training programme which the trainee is undertaking

GP Residents in a GP Practice post

GP residents in a **6-month** GP Practice placement are entitled to 30 sessions of Study Leave, 20 of which are already incorporated into the half day release. Therefore, a total of 10 Study Leave sessions remain for courses and to write up research etc.

The half-day release is mandatory attendance and is monitored by the local education team, who will check that absent residents are on approved leave e.g. annual leave or sickness leave.

During any break in the GP residents' half-day release, this session should remain an educational session. It can be used in a self-directed manner or for targeted educational activity in agreement between the resident and trainer, i.e. the resident still has seven clinical and three educational sessions that week.

When GP residents take leave during the week, the ratio of clinical: educational sessions should be maintained, with flexibility being exercised by both the practice and the resident when required. A suggested and appropriate balance for any given week might be:

- 5 Day working week: 7 clinical: 3 educational sessions
- 4 Day working week: 6 clinical: 2 educational sessions
- 3 Day working week: 4 clinical: 2 educational sessions
- 2 Day working week: 3 clinical: 1 educational session
- 1 Day working week: 2 clinical: 0 educational sessions

(Or the pro rata amount for those residents in flexible (part time) placements).

When GP residents are in a General Practice post, GP Practice Managers are expected to keep a record of the number of sessions that GPSTs request to take off for Study Leave.

The following examples outline the types of activities that are considered an appropriate and educationally relevant use of Study Leave.

Acceptable use of study leave

- Leave to sit examinations
- Time to write up research
- Private Study (limited to 10 sessions in a 12-month post & 5 sessions in a 6-month post)
- Courses and webinars that supplement areas of the GP Curriculum e.g., Child Health Surveillance, Minor Surgery, GP Hot Topics. (In the case of online training that can be undertaken at any time, residents are advised to complete training on a scheduled working day and to request the appropriate Study Leave time)
- Subscriptions to GP CPD Programmes e.g. Red Whale GP CPD
- Diplomas e.g. Sexual Health & DRCOG
- Attendance at RCGP Conferences

Examples of unacceptable use of study leave

- Courses and conferences held overseas (these may be granted in exceptional circumstances)
- Attendance at conferences of other specialties
- Pursuing special medical interests with less relevance to the GP Curriculum
- Residents who act as representatives on professional committees should apply for Professional Leave.
- Residents who assist with teaching/assessing at medical schools should apply for Professional Leave.

Aspirational courses that go beyond the GP Curriculum and are to further the development of particular interests may be approved in exceptional circumstances, but prior approval should be sought from HEIW.GPTraining@wales.nhs.uk

APPENDIX 2 – Notification of Study Leave Appeal Form

NOTIFICATION OF STUDY LEAVE APPEAL

Please complete all sections of the form.

Name:
Grade:
Specialty:
Names of Medical Education Manager or Leave approver for Dental:
I have informed the above named of my decision to appeal against the decision: YES/NO <i>Please delete as appropriate</i>
Details of Appeal:
Title of Course:
Dates of Study Leave:
Date of Online Leave Application:
Number of Days:
Study Leave Funding Required: YES/NO If Yes, please specify amount:
Funding Agreed:
Details of educational benefit of Study Leave:
Reasons for Appeal:
Signature: Date:

Please return the completed form to HEIW