



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

*Rheynn Slaynt*

# Study Leave Policy

## Introduction

1.1 This document outlines the policy of the Department of Health regarding study leave and financial support for its staff undertaking courses of study in connection with their work for the Department.

1.2 The document also includes details of the procedure for applying for study leave and funding for courses and a standard form is included which supersedes all previous forms for application for study leave, financial assistance and travel and subsistence in connection with courses, conferences etc.

## 2.0 Definition of terms

2.1 Study Leave is a period of time agreed with the employee's line manager when the employee would have paid leave to undertake agreed education, training and development activities.

2.2 Continuous Professional Development is the development of competence throughout a professional career in accordance with the regulatory requirements of relevant professional bodies and in order to achieve agreed business objectives. It includes the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of relevant knowledge and skills.

## 3.0 Scope of the Policy

3.1 This policy relates to all Department of Health staff except civil servants. Study leave policies relating to civil servants can be found in the Civil Service Regulations.

3.2 This policy relates to all bank/agency staff and to locum staff but not to contractors.

3.3 This policy relates to the following learning activities:

- Attendance at programmes of further and higher education
- Vocational qualifications
- Training courses

- Conferences or seminars
- Mandatory training
- Workshops, events and study days
- Professional study groups and meetings
- Distance learning courses
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Secondments
- Job rotation
- On-the job training
- In-house training
- E-learning
- Tests and examinations
- Research
- Action learning sets
- Training others
- Communities of practice
- Buddying
- Job shadowing/observing
- Substitution
- Providing cover
- Projects and assignments
- Job swaps

#### **4.0 Policy Statement**

4.1 The Department's Learning Plan states that learning and development are fundamental to the provision of high quality health and care services and the Department of Health has a healthy culture of proactive learning and development fostered by managers and welcomed by staff.

4.2 Managers may, at their discretion, authorise financial assistance for continuing professional development/educational events, subject to the conditions below, taking into account the need to maintain required staffing levels in their part of the Department.

4.3 In using that discretion, managers need to be consistent in their approach to approving leave and expenses for education and training purposes. They must adhere to the criteria laid down and apply them fairly and equitably to all staff within their area of management.

4.4 No group of staff should be excluded from study leave or funding provisions. Particular care should be taken to ensure that part-time staff or those with carer responsibilities are not discriminated against either directly or indirectly and are afforded equal access to learning opportunities. Similarly, care should be taken to ensure that those working unusual shift patterns or night shifts can still access learning opportunities.

4.5 Wherever possible study leave and expenses should not be approved by the line manager unless they have been agreed in the supervision, appraisal or performance review process pertaining to that member of staff. The learning concerned should contribute to the achievement of the business plans and objectives of the Division, unit, ward or section of which that employee is a part.

4.6 Managers across the Department are responsible for making staff aware of suitable education, training and development opportunities for their staff and actively encouraging staff to participate.

4.7 Individual members of staff are responsible for their own training and development. Where staff have Continuing Professional Development requirements which should be recorded and subject to actual or potential verification by professional bodies it is the member of staff's own responsibility to maintain their CPD and their record of that.

4.8 Managers are responsible for ensuring that there is no discrimination on grounds of age, gender, race, or other irrelevant stereotypes in the application of this policy.

4.9 Study leave of up to one day per examination may be granted for examinations for nationally recognised qualifications.

4.10 In the event of an employee disagreeing with the decision of their line manager they may seek to resolve the issue through the use of the Department's grievance procedure.

## **5.0 Criteria for leave and expenses**

5.1 Neither leave nor the reimbursement of expenses may be claimed as a right.

5.2 When considering applications for leave (paid or otherwise) and/or the possibility of reimbursement of expenses, each case will be reviewed individually on its own merits by the relevant managers. In particular the manager will

- Determine the relevance of the study to the performance of current and prospective duties and to the career structure for the grade of staff concerned.
- Determine the opportunities (or lack of them) for the applicant to keep abreast of and/or add to his/her knowledge through means other than formal training
- Consider the requirements of professional bodies for protected time and study leave
- Consider the needs of the service
- Consider the level of study activity previously afforded to the member of staff.
- Consider the needs of all members of the team

5.3 Study leave will always be granted for mandatory training. Attendance at DH mandatory training does not form part of the study leave allowance for doctors.

5.4 Study leave for attendance at course, conferences and other developmental events will not normally be agreed where staff members have failed to attend mandatory training.

## **6.0 Timescales**

6.1 Although the education and training budget is provided annually, managers should consider longer term demands on their budgets. Line managers should as far as possible, ensure that they are committed to funding courses for their full duration. However, in agreeing to fund a course during one year the Department is not automatically committed to funding subsequent years of the same programme.

## **7.0 Pay during study time**

7.1 Where study leave has been agreed staff will be paid in accordance with their usual contractual arrangements.

7.2 Where an area of learning is considered desirable for the person to perform their role taking into account the factors in para. 5.2 above, managers may give consideration to the possibility of giving fees and expenses or time off but not necessarily both.

## **8.0 Travel**

8.1 Travel time for attendance at courses, study days, events etc will not normally be paid unless otherwise stated in terms and conditions.

## **9.0 Procedure**

9.1 All applications (except mandatory training) must be made in writing using the Application Form for Study Leave and/or to Attend a Conference, Training or Business Event



dhapplicationforstudyleaveandupdated.pdf

9.2 Applicants must include the aims and objectives of the learning.

9.3 Expenses and time off must be agreed prior to acceptance of the course or event.

9.4 Where an employee works in more than one part of the Department e.g. two part-time jobs or bank working, they should not claim study leave and/or fees and

expenses from more than one place. They should also agree their application with each place where they work and record it in their appraisal/performance review record.

9.5 Where leave with pay is granted the employee must not undertake any remunerative work during the period of study leave.

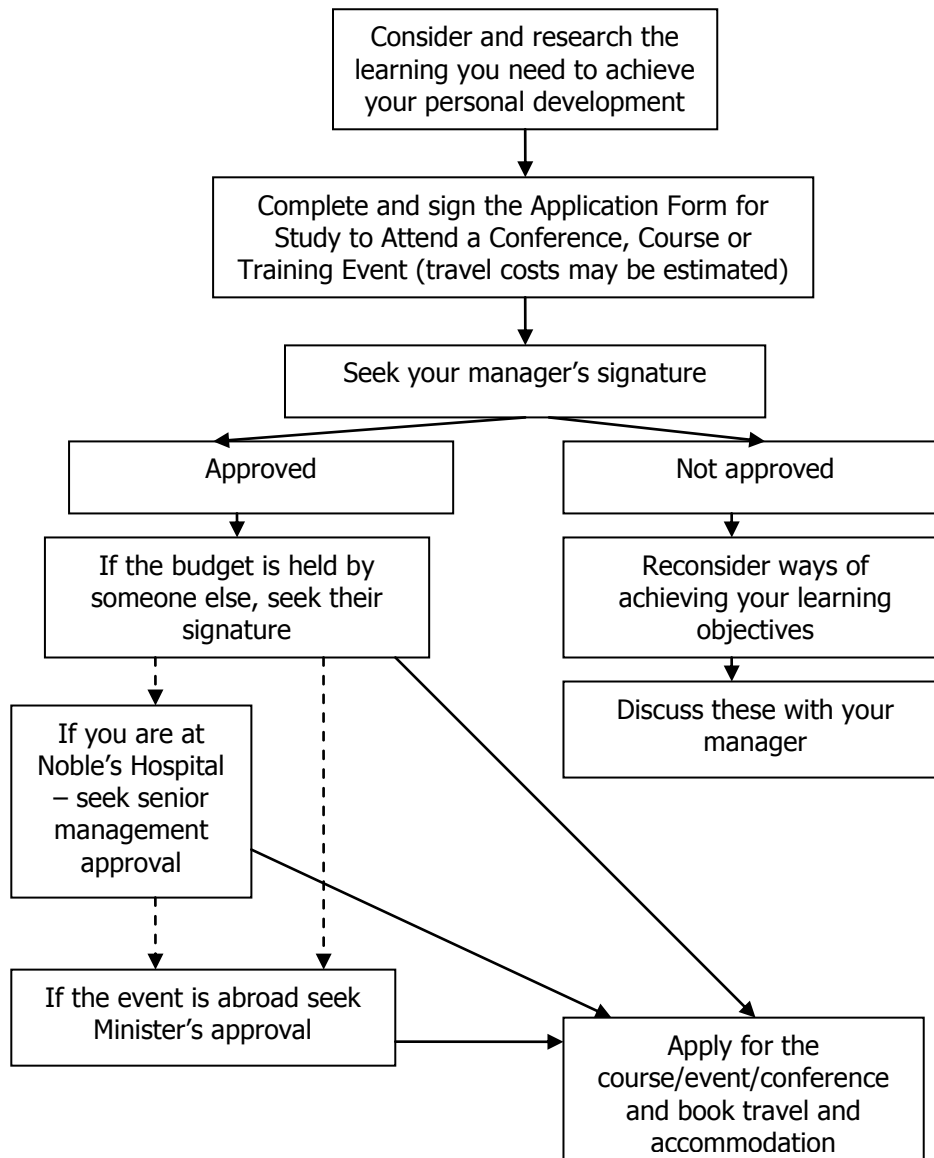
9.6 The cost of a course may be reclaimed from the individual in the following circumstances:

- if they fail to complete the course
- if they withdraw from the course less than a week before commencement
- if they fail to attend.

9.7 Training leave should be recorded in the individual's Oracle HRFS record and managers are responsible for keeping accurate records of staff education and training.

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Author of Policy</b> | <b>Head of Learning on behalf of the Learning Strategy Group</b> |
| <b>Policy drafted</b>   | <b>November 2006</b>   |
| <b>Policy reviewed</b>  | <b>November 2007</b>   |
|                         | <b>September 2010</b>  |
|                         | <b>May 2013</b>  |
| <b>Next review date</b> | <b>May 2016</b>  |

## Procedure Study Leave and Funding to Attend a Conference, Course or Training Event



NB Doctors employed through a Mersey Deanery lead trust need to apply for study leave using the Mersey Deanery procedure and forms.