



ICGP Policy on Educational Leave

Adopted by PGTC - May 2017.

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Members of the NCCT Task Group on Educational Leave

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The taskgroup wish to acknowledge the work undertaken by previous members of the task group which informed this document.

Consultation Process

The draft report prepared by the NCCT Task Group was circulated to all stakeholders including Trainees, Trainers, Programme Directors and Steering Committees for feedback. The report was then submitted and adopted by:

- The National Co-ordinating Committee for Training – April 2017
- The Postgraduate Training Committee – May 2017

The document will be reviewed in May 2018.



ICGP Policy on Educational Leave

Introduction:

The aim of GP Training is to produce fit for purpose General Practitioners capable of independent practice following completion of their training. The core of this training takes place in the general practice training setting. The learning that takes place in the practice is essentially experiential learning based on day to day general practice. This will set the template for learning needs going forward, and provide the basic skills for self-identified learning needs and lifelong learning. The time spent in the practice should be optimized in training.

When applying or approving educational leave it is important that a fair balance between training requirements (75% attendance in post), the educational needs of the individual trainee and the service commitment to the post are achieved.

The purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to provide national guidance on educational leave in three specific areas:

1. The process of applying for Educational Leave.
2. The Principles of what is/is not generally allowed:
3. Guidance on the amount of Educational leave normally granted for commonly taken courses/exams

This guidance document should be flexible and used in the spirit with which it is intended, to guide Programme Directors, Educational Supervisors and trainees, and not simply limit trainees.

These specific areas will now be addressed:

1. The Process of applying for Educational leave:

There are a number of **key factors** which must be considered when applying for educational leave.

1. **Educational need** is to be a key factor in this decision.
2. Educational leave must have **a direct relevance to GP training**
3. It must be acknowledged that it may not always be possible to be relieved of duties in hospital or GP posts *on dates or at times requested*.

The process of applying for Educational Leave:

The Educational Supervisor (i.e. consultant or GP trainer) should give approval first, in principle, with the programme directing team then making a final decision, based solely on educational merit.

All educational leave should be discussed by the trainee and a nominated member of the programme directing team on a minimum of a 6 monthly basis. This would reflect the trainee's learning needs, requests and past educational leave, before a plan is agreed for the coming months. This meeting could be aligned with regular one to one reviews which are already happening in all schemes.

Requests for educational leave occurring between these 1:1 meetings should be in writing (email) to PD team, at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed date, having been approved by the immediate educational supervisor (i.e. consultant or GP trainer). While all attempts should be made to apply for leave at least 4 weeks before the leave is due to start, educational leave applied for at late notice should be treated in the same way as other requests for educational leave and approved on its merit.

Educational leave cannot be applied for retrospectively.

2. Principles of what is/is not generally allowed:

Trainees applying for educational leave will need to match the proposed leave to their personal learning needs and to the competencies of General Practice.

Courses that have previously been approved for specialist training funding by the ICGP (available on the ICGP website) may be deemed suitable for educational leave. A trainee should not be restricted from undertaking an appropriate course because it is not on such a list. The process for approving courses not on the list is outlined below.

If the educational supervisor and Programme Director feel that the proposed educational leave is appropriate for that trainee it may be granted.

If the educational supervisor/Programme Director is unsure, they may be guided by:

1. ICGP list of activities that have been previously approved for the specialist training fund.
2. Educational activities organised by Universities or recognised training institutions.

Even if a course/meeting is "approved", it may not be suitable for a specific trainee at a given time.

ICGP recognizes that it does not have a monopoly on educational leave activities.

Process through which ICGP assesses the merit of new educational activities for educational leave or specialist training fund:

1. An application is made to the GP Training Unit, ICGP for approval of the educational activity. The following details will be requested:
 - a brief outline of the educational activity to include learning aims and objectives, any assessment, duration
 - educational course/activity designer
 - educational course/activity coordinator-for contact or queries
 - immediate supervisor for the trainee during that activity
2. The GP Training Unit will liaise with the relevant project director/committee chair to assess the merit of the application based on the information provided.
3. A decision is made and communicated to the applicant.
4. An appeal can be made to PGTC on a case by case basis.

Diplomas

Diplomas in subspecialty areas are popular with many trainees. It is understood they can enhance Trainees CVs, provide further skills to better treat their patients and allow exploration of individual areas of interests. Some relevant diplomas which complement experience gained in both hospital and general practice may be worthwhile and valuable.

Completion of CSCT and MICGP exams should be the main focus during GP training and these alone are sufficient for producing fit for purpose GP's.

It is important to emphasize the importance of GP trainees spending an adequate amount of time seeing patients in practice. Trainees should aim to gain most of the relevant skills while in practice and use this opportunity to perfect their consultation skills while identifying and addressing their learning needs.

As with all educational leave requests, proposed leave for partaking in a diploma must be discussed with the trainee's educational supervisor and programme directing team. The MICGP exams are a compulsory requirement for the CSCT and therefore adequate time must be allocated primarily to these exams.

3. Amount of Educational leave normally granted for commonly taken courses/exams

It is important to be mindful that each doctor in training is different.

In certain circumstances educational leave will be assigned for specific scheme compulsory activities (e.g. early exposure to general practice, special interest clinics and ACLS/BLS courses). Trainees and Educational Supervisors should be made aware of these compulsory requirements at the commencement of the training year as these days may take precedent over other educational leave.

When granting educational leave a fair balance between training requirements, the educational needs of the individual trainee and the service commitment of the post should be achieved. Where there is a dispute regarding educational leave the Programme Director has a role in ensuring that this balance is achieved. Educational leave is discretionary as per HSE NCHD contract.

The HSE contract on educational leave* states:

a. Educational Leave

- i. The Employer may, taking account of the NCHD's medical education and training status, grant the NCHD up to a maximum of 18 working days (based on a 7.8 hour working day) per 6-month period to facilitate:
 1. Attendance at courses, conferences, and educational events determined to be appropriate by the HSE, the recognised postgraduate training bodies and the Universities;
 2. Study leave prior to an examination or repeat examination for higher degrees or diplomas determined to be appropriate by the HSE, the recognised postgraduate training bodies and the Universities;
 3. Attendance at examinations determined to be appropriate by the HSE, the recognised postgraduate training bodies and the Universities;
 4. Attendance at interviews within the Irish public health service appropriate to the NCHD's training / career pathway;
- i. All educational leave must:
 1. be relevant,
 2. take account of service and rota needs,
 3. be recommended by the supervising Consultant / Clinical Director and
 4. be approved by the Employer in advance in line with the Employer's leave policy and with cognisance of the requirements of any specialist training / professional competence scheme the NCHD is participating in and related medical education and training requirements.

*dated November 2016

