

Guidance for Study Leave Exception Approvers 2019

Health Education England, East Midlands
Local Team



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Guidance for Exception Approvers – Leave Manager

The Leave Manager system offers applicants two options for submitting leave requests; Standard applications (for activities on their School's/Programme's list of curriculum required events), and Exception requests.

What is an Exception approver?

Exception approvers are a senior member of the School's faculty, usually the TPD or Head of School, whose responsibility is to ensure that the activity being applied for is appropriate for the trainee's specialty, grade, career trajectory and curriculum competences.

HEE's document, [Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives](#), includes a commitment from HEE to ensure that every trainee has the opportunity to gain all competences relevant to their level of training as defined in each curriculum. This means that activities that directly support acquisition of curriculum competences will be fully funded by HEE and should be available on Leave Manager as a Standard activity, requiring no additional approval.

However, this also means that Recommended and Additional activities (i.e. activities that support a trainee's overall career development or special interests) will need careful consideration as to whether they are appropriate to fund (either fully or partially).

This guidance is designed to provide some initial support regarding the kinds of things to consider when reviewing an Exception application. If you're still unsure, or if you have any other queries, please contact the East Midlands study leave team at CSL.EM@hee.nhs.uk, and we'll be happy to help.

Recommended and Additional activities

Although HEE has committed to supporting trainees achieving their curriculum competences by providing additional financial support through the CSL budget, we are aware that there are additional competences of benefit to trainees' current practice or future career aspirations and development. These are referred to as Recommended and Additional activities. Such activities should be discussed between the trainee and their Educational Supervisor, and included in the trainee's PDP for the year. If this has been done, the activity is appropriate for the trainee's stage of training/progression, and the costs/period of leave are appropriate, you can generally approve the request.

We would generally expect that additional activities would not be supported if the trainee is not progressing satisfactorily, as their focus should be on attaining curriculum competences.

Study Leave Budget

Following the changes in the national study leave budget in 2018, all curriculum required activities are covered by the study leave budget. Any exception requests may be considered for funding, taking into account all circumstances listed below. There is no definite cap on the funding provided for recommended and additional requests. However it must be considered that; the activity is beneficial to the trainee's PDP, it is value for money and there is no alternative activity which provides the same competencies for a cheaper cost.

International leave

International courses/conferences will not be included on the list of pre-approved courses unless attendance is a curriculum requirement.

International study leave should occur when the learning outcomes from the event are not available in the UK. As part of the approvals process, requests to attend overseas study events will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

The event must provide a clearly stated curriculum outcome. Such circumstances include where the training course is not available in the UK, where the course or activity is part of the college curriculum or guidelines on required training, for the presentation of significant research findings from within an NIHR recognised academic clinical fellowship or clinical lectureship or where the course is set out as a mandatory requirement of college training to reach the required qualification to practice.

A full programme should be provided. A report recovering the entirety of the leave may be requested from the doctor in training after attendance. Any contribution to funding of such leave will need the prior written approval of the HEE local Postgraduate Dean. If further periods of international study leave are required this will be considered on a case by case basis by the Postgraduate dean, and budget allowing.

Given that best practice in many specialties is now shared at European and global meetings, the lack of ability to attend international events may hamper advancing of medical knowledge and service development. This may also have the unintended consequence of preventing quality improvement within the NHS.

One international event, providing all other curriculum requirements are met will be supported for each doctor in training for any

one programme, which can be defined as Foundation, Core, Higher or run through.

For such activities, part-funding may be considered – reflecting both HEE and the trainee's commitment to their enrichment. If an external body such as a Medical Royal College suggests a doctor in training attends an international conference. In such circumstances, HEE expects that body to contribute at least 50% of the costs.

Meetings at which Junior Doctors Present Papers

Junior doctors should be encouraged to present papers at academic and clinical meetings. The decision as to whether associated costs would be considered will depend on whether the meeting concerned is judged by the TPD or Head of School (the exception approver) as relevant to the curriculum and/or an aspirational activity that is beneficial to the junior doctor's development.

What not to approve

Under the new arrangements, most activities that trainees request will be on the approved list, or will require a fairly straightforward review of whether the activity is appropriate for their programme, grade and career trajectory. However, there are a few activities that should not be approved for either leave or financing. These are included in the policy so trainees should be aware, but they are summarised below.

Mandatory training for potential future training programmes

As a general rule, mandatory training (ALS, ATLS, NLS etc.) that is not required for a trainee's current training programme, but is required for a potential future training programme, should not be supported from the CSL budget. Exceptional cases may be considered, but please discuss these with the HEE team first (CSL.EM@hee.nhs.uk).

Academic research

If the trainee is on an academic programme, academic research that is additional to the acquisition of the relevant GMC approved clinical curriculum competencies should not be funded by the Study Leave budget, but through the funding source for the junior doctor's academic research; for example, via the University or NIHR.

Higher degrees

The CSL entitlement is not an appropriate source of time or funding for higher degrees (including Masters and PhDs), unless the degree is a specific and mandatory requirement for CCT. In these rare instances, please discuss with the CSL Team (CSL.EM@hee.nhs.uk).

Observerships/Clinical attachment

Study leave days/budgets may not be used towards observerships or clinical attachments.

Professional activities

Leave for Mandatory Teaching expected of the trainee's employer (that is not a curriculum requirement), training such as ALS, Interview Leave and Employer Related leave do not come under CSL and this leave should not be booked on Leave Manager. Similarly, attendance at GP Selection Centre, Specialty Training or Consultant interviews is not Study Leave and this should not be applied for on Leave Manager. Trainees should seek advice from their Trust about applying for Professional Leave in these situations (local arrangements may apply).

Courses where an equivalent course is run and funded by HEE

Where a course is offered by HEE/a HEE East Midlands school (e.g. Leadership & Management), funding will not generally be approved for the same/similar course delivered by an external provider. If the trainee is unable to attend the East Midlands course and needs to have completed the course before the next East Midlands date,

the trainee is expected to contact us regarding this.

We hope that this helps; this document is not intended to be exhaustive, but simply to provide some additional support and guidance regarding Exception applications. We will regularly update this guidance, but if you have any applications that you're unsure of, or if you need any other support relating to trainee study leave applications, please contact us at CSL.EM@hee.nhs.uk.