



STUDY LEAVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. NHS 24 is committed to investing in the education, training and ongoing development of all staff.
- 1.2. This Study Leave policy demonstrates NHS 24's commitment to the development of staffs' current and future potential within NHS 24, through allowing time off for, and meeting the expenses of, relevant training courses, conferences, external meetings or other educational events. This policy is **one** means by which NHS 24 provides commitment to the development of staffs' current and future potential within their job role, through a structured approach and process.
- 1.3. All applications for study leave shall be considered by the Line Manager and therefore may only be approved after taking into account both service demands and budgetary commitments.
- 1.4. ***This policy applies to all NHS 24 staff and has been developed to ensure that there is equity of access and opportunity to all aspects of learning and development for all NHS 24 staff.***

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. For ease of understanding, all time off from work for education purposes that is authorised by the Line Manager, will fall into one of 2 categories: Bursary Award courses or Training Events.
 - 2.1.1. **Bursary Award courses:** The Bursary Award Scheme provides financial assistance for employees undergoing courses of study or development that will predominantly lead to gaining a recognised educational or professional qualification. An employee who has been successful in their Bursary application is NOT guaranteed any study leave for their course; any requirement for time off during normal working hours must be discussed and agreed with their Line Manager, and a Study Leave form must be completed so that this time off can be properly tracked by the Learning & Development Department.
 - 2.1.2. For further information on the Bursary Award Scheme policy, refer to the appropriate policy document.
 - 2.1.3. **Training Events:** These are generally activities that will have an educational or developmental purpose and which lead to the acquisition of skills or knowledge relevant to an employee's current or future role at NHS 24. Training events are deemed to be primarily short training courses of skills and/or knowledge development, but may also include attendance at conferences, seminars or designated meetings.

3. FUNDING OF STUDY LEAVE EVENTS

- 3.1. All funding is held centrally by the Head of Learning and Development. However, Directors will have an annual allocation from which they can draw from to fund attendance at training events. These courses will normally be paid in full by the organisation.
- 3.2. Exceptions to the above are where fees are in the excess of £1000. In this case employees may be asked to contribute to the cost. Employees and their managers should contact the Learning & Development department to discuss this in the first instance.
- 3.3 Employees who receive support in excess of £1000 and who leave NHS 24 within one year of their funded course finishing, will be required to repay 100% of the funding received.

4. AUTHORISATION OF STUDY LEAVE

- 4.1. The level of authorisation required for study leave will depend on the seniority of the employee who is requesting the study leave. The authorisation required is as follows:

Category of Employees	Authorisation
Anyone applying for overseas study leave	Appropriate Executive Director with final approval taken by the Director of Human Resources
Chief Executive and non-executive trustees	Chairman
Executive Directors	Chief Executive
Senior Managers	Director of Function
All Other Employees	Head of Function/Line Manager

5. LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

- 5.1. **Bursary Award courses:** For employees in receipt of a Bursary Award, any requirement for time off during normal working hours for course-related matters (e.g. attending classes, sitting exams, etc.) must be discussed and agreed with their Line Manager - it is expected that time off from work for Bursary Award courses would consist of a combination of the following;
 - use of annual leave
 - shift swaps
 - working time back
 - “Study leave”, where Line Managers agree that “study leave” is appropriate. Study Leave should not exceed 5 days in any given financial year. This is NOT to say that employees have a right to the maximum number of days, rather it is a guide to increase

flexibility of options. The study leave which is authorised can be used to attend classes, sit exams, work on assignments, or any such combination of relevant study activities. It should be noted that leave in connection with Bursary is in addition to, and does not impact on any entitlement to study leave for any other purpose.

- 5.2. **Training events:** Where attendance at appropriate training events (short courses, conferences, etc) has been approved, employees are entitled to paid study leave, including any enhanced pay, during normal working hours.
- 5.3. Where travel to or from venues is required and this impinges on personal time, time in lieu will not normally be granted. Obviously, if significant travel is required, you may come to an agreement with your Line Manager on this. This should be discussed and agreed prior to a Study Leave application being made.
- 5.4. Where the study leave falls on a public holiday, you will be entitled to receive time off in lieu. This again would require to be discussed with your Line Manager.

6. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

- 6.1. It is recognised that employees with a disability may require additional support in order to attend training events. Any such requirements should be communicated to the Head of Learning and Development. All required support will be provided in order to allow the employee to participate fully in their course of study.

7. EXPENSES

- 7.1. **Bursary courses:** The funding for Bursary courses is covered in a separate policy document – for full details, please refer to Bursary Award Scheme Policy document.
- 7.2. **Training courses:** Reasonable and agreed expenses will be met in line with NHS 24 Expenses Policy. Where expenses have been incurred, an “Expenses Claim Form” should be completed – this form should be completed and all receipts for any expenditure must be attached. Once completed, expense forms should be signed by the Line Manager and forwarded to the Corporate Services department at Delta House. Expenses paid out will be reimbursed through the employee’s monthly salary. The cut off date for submission is generally within 5 days of the end of the month of incurring the expenditure, and expenses will be reimbursed in the following month’s salary. Please refer to NHS 24’s Expenses policy for further information.

8. OVERSEAS EVENTS

- 8.1. Where study leave involves travel overseas to attend a seminar, conference or similar event then applications for study leave will need to be supported by the appropriate Executive Director. The application form then requires to be sent to the Director of Human Resources for final approval prior to being processed in the normal way.

9. THE PROCESS FOR APPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Reporting requirements for the Race Relations Amendment [2000] Act and the Disability Discrimination Act require us to report on and publicise anonymised data on the applications received from staff for study leave and those which have been approved/declined by line management. We are currently considering how all applications and approvals/declines can be monitored electronically. Until such times as an electronic system becomes available, monitoring will be paper based
- 9.2. Any employee who wishes to attend a course, conference or short course of study must first obtain the Study Leave Policy and Procedure and the Study Leave Request form. These documents can be found on the intranet on the following page: http://anhs24gw2k14/intranet/content/default.asp?page=s3_6_3 or by contacting the Learning and Development Department at Clyde Contact Centre.
- 9.3. Please read the Study Leave Policy and Procedure prior to completion of the form. The following process should then be followed:
- Individual completes the request for Study Leave Application Form (sections A & B);
 - Individual send in the form to Learning and Development
 - Learning and Development log the request and forward the form to the relevant manager for completion of section C: authorization
 - Line manager forwards the completed form to Learning and Development
- 9.4. Where a line manager has not approved a request for study leave, the rationale for non-approval must be given on the application form and recorded by Learning and Development for monitoring purposes only.
- 9.5. On receipt of this form the Learning and Development Department will record the request and make appropriate bookings (if required).
- 9.6. The Learning and Development Department will raise the Purchase Order for the relevant payment. Quarterly reports will be made available to relevant managers to provide detail on expenditure to date.
- 9.7. The Learning and Development Department will record the employee's attendance at the training event as part of their training record.

10. NON ATTENDANCE OF COURSES

- 10.1. It is recognised that there may be cases where employees are unable to attend or complete their course/ conference. In this event, the candidate MUST notify the Head of Learning and Development as soon as possible in order that an alternative candidate or cancellation can be arranged.
- 10.2. The employee may be asked to repay NHS 24 in part or in full for the course or conference fees, if a refund is not possible. Each case of incomplete or failed course will be dealt with on an individual basis.

11. SHARING THE LEARNING

- 11.1. NHS 24 is keen that all learning is shared across the organisation, and employees may be requested to complete a short report on any training events which they have attended. The purpose of this is to highlight key benefits and knowledge gained and to provide any further useful information.

12. KSF & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENTS PLANS

- 12.1. With the introduction of the Agenda for Change there will be occasions where employees will request study leave to support their knowledge and skills development that they themselves have identified.
- 12.2. Where this is the case, the employee should in the first instance have a discussion with their line manager around the agreement of objectives and the skills or knowledge development requirement before documenting this information within their Personal Development Plan.
- 12.3. Thereafter, the request for study leave should be followed as per instructions detailed earlier in the policy.

13. GRIEVANCE PROCESS

- 13.1 Employees who feel that a reasonable request for study leave has been declined may raise a grievance through the NHS 24 grievance process.

14. REVIEW

- 14.1 This policy will be reviewed in Partnership on a two-yearly basis.

15. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 15.1 The Policy will be impact-assessed and monitored for its effects in terms of equality and diversity.