# POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR NCHD EDUCATIONAL AND ANNUAL LEAVE

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<th>SUBJECT:</th>
<th>NCHD Educational and Annual Leave</th>
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<td>Ratified By:</td>
<td>Medical Manpower Unit</td>
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<td>Date of Implementation:</td>
<td>July 11th 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person responsible for Policy/implementation and review:</td>
<td>Medical Manpower Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revision Date</td>
<td>July 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edition Number</td>
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1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the guidelines for NCHDs annual and educational leave arrangements. These have been developed to ensure that there is cover and adequate recording of annual and educational leave to enable Departments and teams to function effectively.

2. **Scope**

This policy applies to NCHDs in the Mid Regional Hospital Group of Hospitals and includes the following hospital sites:

- Mid Western Regional Hospital Dooradoyle
- Mid Western Regional Hospitals Ennis
- Mid Western Regional Hospitals Nenagh
- Mid Western Regional Hospital Orthopaedic Hospital Croom
- Mid Western Regional Hospital Maternity Hospital, Ennis Road Limerick

In addition the following sites in Primary Community & Continuing Care Services are covered by this policy

- Limerick Mental Health Services
- Clare Mental Health Services
- Tipperary Mental Health Services
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services

3. **Eligibility**

As set out in the NCHD Contract 2010, employers may, taking into account an NCHD’s medical education and training status, grant an NCHD up to a maximum of 18 working days educational leave per six month period. There is no minimum entitlement to educational leave.

The amount of actual educational leave granted will be informed by the type of training that the NCHD is participating in and this may further differ by grade, speciality and subspecialty.

The leave must be relevant, must take account of service and rota needs and must be recommended by the supervising Consultant/Clinical Director and must be approved by the Employer in advance. The final decision regarding any application for educational leave lies with the employer and the employer has the right to refuse an application for such leave.

4. **Procedure for Educational Leave Notification**

An NCHD must give sufficient notice of his/her intention to avail of educational leave taking into account local circumstances in relation to service and rota requirements. All applications for educational leave must be recorded on the Leave Application Form, recommended by the supervising Consultant and approved by Medical Manpower or where relevant Hospital Manager/Hospital Administrator/Service Administrator. Certificates/documentary evidence of attendance must be provided in support of all educational leave requests.

For all NCHDs working in the **Mid Western Regional Hospital Dooradoyle**, written application for educational leave must be submitted into the Salaries Office, 3rd Floor,
Nurses Home Building (opposite PPARS office), 4 weeks in advance of the commencement of leave. In the case of the other sites in the HSE – Mid West the leave application forms must be submitted into the following areas:

- Mid Western Regional Hospitals Ennis and Nenagh – The Hospital Manager’s office
- Mid Western Regional Orthopaedic Hospital Croom – The Hospital Administrator’s office
- Mid Western Regional Maternity Hospital – The Hospital Administrator’s office
- Limerick Mental Health Services - St Josephs Hospital, Mulgrave Street, Limerick
- Clare Mental Health Services – Teach de Paor, Dulick, Gort Road, Ennis
- Tipperary Mental Health Services – Derg Centre, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services – 90 O’Connell Street, Limerick

5. Approval Requirements

To assist NCHDs in accessing appropriate educational leave, the following guidelines are relevant for the purpose of approving educational leave:

a) The leave must be relevant to the requirements of any specialist training/professional competence scheme the NCHD is participating in and related medical educational and training requirements
b) The leave must be recommended by the supervising Consultant/clinical director and take account of service and rota needs and be approved by the Employer in advance
c) The final decision regarding any application for educational leave lies with the employer and the employer has the right to refuse an application for such leave
d) There is no minimum entitlement to educational leave
e) Where leave is being granted in relation to exams, courses or conferences, it should only be granted if these are scheduled to take place within the contract period
f) If leave is overtaken the Employer reserves the right to make appropriate salary deductions
g) Where leave is being granted in relation to courses, conferences or other educational activities abroad, the employer will have regard to whether similar or equally valuable educational opportunities exist in Ireland prior to issuing approval
h) It is important to note approval of such leave does not imply approval for any associated costs

6. Course, Conferences and Educational Events

a) Applications from NCHDs engaged in specialist medical training to attend those elements of mandatory training as defined in the relevant agreement between the HSE and the relevant postgraduate training body and the Universities will be supported where possible. Details of educational programmes provided by the Postgraduate Training Bodies is outlined in appendix 1 of the HSE MET (Medical Education Training Unit) document ‘Guidance to Employers Regarding NCHD Training Supports available from 1st of July 2010’
b) Applications from NCHDs engaged in structured professional competence schemes to attend elements of supports as defined in the relevant agreement between the HSE and the relevant educational provider, will be supported where possible.

c) In relation to applications for educational leave from NCHDs to attend educational courses, conferences, clinical meetings etc that are not being funded via the HSE i.e. the NCHD themselves are funding their attendance, cognisance must be given to the guidelines detailed in the ‘General Guidelines’ section (2) of this policy.

d) Applications from NCHDs to attend approved clinical courses will be supported where possible as long as the clinical course being undertaken is the first sitting of this course by the applicant or is a re-certification in the clinical course after the required two year period.

e) Certificates/documentary evidence of attendance at these educational events by NCHDs is required as appropriate.

7. Study Leave

a) 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.

8. Examination Leave

a) Attendance at examinations determined to be appropriate by the HSE; the recognised postgraduate training bodies and the Universities will be supported where possible. A list of such approved examinations is detailed in the HSE MET guidance document.

b) In line with HSE MET guidance, up to 10 days educational leave per approved examination in a six month period may be approved.

c) Applications for educational leave for approved exams, can only be approved if the exam is taking place in the relevant period of employment or immediately subsequent to it.

d) Documentary evidence must be provided of the exam having been paid for and a copy of written confirmation from the providers confirming that the applicant is due to sit the exam for which education leave is being applied for.

e) Educational leave does not provide for leave for a 2nd membership exam in the same speciality e.g. MRCP/MRCPUK.

f) Educational leave is not provided for examinations to register with other Medical Council bodies or examinations related to working in other countries e.g. USMLES.
9. Other related Educational Activities

a) Attendance at interviews within the Irish public health service appropriate to the NCHDs training/career pathway

10. Clinical Course & Examination Refund Scheme for NCHDs

A contribution towards the HSE approved clinical course and examinations is available to NCHDs from the HSE’s Medical Education & Training (MET) Unit. A list of HSE approved clinical courses and examinations are detailed in Appendix 1 of the HSE MET document ‘Guidance Document for Employers & NCHDs’ (Sept 2011).

The amount available is a maximum of €450 per clinical course/examination per NCHD. If the actual cost of the clinical course or examination is less than €450, the amount refunded by the HSE will be equal to the actual cost incurred by the NCHD. The refund process involves accepting applications, verifying successful completion of exam/course, seeking reimbursements from the HSE MET Unit and then refunding the individual NCHD. For NCHDs working in the various sites in the Mid-West the following can be contacted for further information in relation to the refund process:

- Mid Western Regional Hospital Dooradoyle, Croom Orthopaedic and Maternity Hospital will involve the Performance & Development Officer (Ann Marie Kennedy, 2nd Floor Nurses Home, Mid Western Regional Hospital Dooradoyle.
- Mid Western Regional Hospital Nenagh – Hospital Manager’s Office
- Mid Western Regional Hospital Ennis – Hospital Manager’s Office
- Limerick Mental Health Services - Administration Unit, Elmhurst, St Josephs Hospital
- Clare Mental Health Services – Teach de Paor, Dulick, Gort Road, Ennis
- Tipperary Mental Health Services – Derg Centre, Nenagh, Co.Tipperary
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services – 90 O’Connell Street, Limerick

11. Annual Leave Entitlements

Annual Leave is granted per 6 month period and is in accordance with the entitlements as set out in the 2010 NCHD Contract. Leave is granted on a pro-rate basis when rotating through more than one hospital and is in accordance with the contracted period to the relevant hospital.

12. Procedure for Annual Leave Notification and Approval

a) The application for annual leave must be initially recommended by the Consultant for whom you will be working with during the relevant period and approved by Medical Manpower or Hospital Manager/ Hospital Administrator/Service Administrator where relevant

b) Annual Leave is granted subject to local circumstances including service and rota requirements
c) In the case of NCHDs working in the Mid Western Regional Hospital, Dooradoyle site. Application for annual leave must be submitted into the Salaries office, 3rd floor, Nurses Home Building (opposite PPARS office) at least 4 weeks in advance of the commencement of the leave.

d) In the case of the other sites in the HSE – Mid West the leave application forms must be submitted into the following areas:
   - Mid Western Regional Hospitals Ennis and Nenagh – The Hospital Manager’s office
   - Mid Western Regional Orthopaedic Hospital Croom – The Hospital Administrator’s office
   - Mid Western Regional Maternity Hospital – The Hospital Administrator’s office
   - Limerick Mental Health Services - St Josephs Hospital, Mulgrave Street, Limerick
   - Clare Mental Health Services – Teach de Paor, Dulick, Gort Road, Ennis
   - Tipperary Mental Health Services – Derg Centre, Nenagh, Co.Tipperary
   - Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services – 90 O’Connell Street, Limerick

e) Application submitted after the leave week has occurred will result in a delayed payment of notional hours

f) Please ensure that you have, in the first instance, consulted with all of your colleagues in your team regarding leave plans

g) NCHDs are advised to plan their leave at the beginning of each six month period

**Please Note**
If you are rotating to St John’s Hospital Limerick as part of a rotation scheme please contact Frank White, HR Manager, St John’s Hospital Limerick at 061 462259 to discuss annual leave and education leave arrangements for St John’s Hospital.

13. **Rota Cover - Procedure for Planned Leave**

   a) NCHDs have to fit their work and duties in with other NCHDs on the following matters:
      - On Call Rotas.
      - All types of leave – i.e. annual, exam and study leave

   b) Each NCHD carries responsibility to check when they are rostered for the above duties. Each NCHD wishing to change their allocated days (whether because of annual leave, educational leave, or their own individual reasons) carries responsibility to ask another NCHD to arrange a swap and to inform their Consultant.

   c) If the NCHD secures an agreement for a swap, the requesting NCHD carries responsibility to ensure the NCHD Rota schedule is changed to reflect the swap and with the approval of the Consultant. Only when the schedule documentation is
changed can the requesting NCHD count themselves as not on duty on the relevant day(s).

14. **Rota Cover - Procedure for Unplanned Leave**

   a) If an NCHD goes on sick leave, they should consider if this means they will be on sick leave on a day they are rostered for on-call duty. In such case the NCHD carries responsibility to notify their expected absence, by telephone, to the Supervising Consultant.

   b) On being informed of such a problem the Supervising Consultant or nominated authorised NCHD will discuss the matter as soon as possible with as many other NCHDs as are necessary to secure a replacement for the sick NCHD on call duty rota.

   c) In the case of unexpected absences, all NCHDs have a responsibility to co-operate at team level to ensure provision of an NCHD replacement for an NCHD who is not available for work.

   d) If there are difficulties with securing cover within the team for the sick leave, then it is the responsibility of the Supervising Consultant or nominated authorised NCHD to make contact to resolve the issue with the relevant Human Resources Dept in the Mid-Western Regional Hospital, Hospital Administrator/Manager in all other hospital sites and Mental Health Administrator/ Scheme Co-ordinator for the psychiatric services.