



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

# Continuing Medical Education Supports for Consultants

## Guidance Document for Consultants, Employers & Training Bodies

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HSE Medical Education & Training:  
Fit for Purpose, in the Irish Health Service

HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE

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# Continuing Medical Education Supports for Consultants

**Context** The document ‘Consultants Implementing the Public Service Agreement’ agreed by health service employers (the Health Service Executive (HSE), Department of Health and Department of Public Expenditure & Reform), the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) and the Irish Hospital Consultants Association (IHCA) notes that:

*“The Medical Practitioners Act 2007 and Consultant Contract 2008 oblige health service employers to facilitate the professional competence of Consultants in their employ. The Management position is that public funding targeted at Continuing Medical Education for Consultants must be utilised and managed in a manner that is aligned with legislative requirements, is transparent, measurable, ensures value for money and is provided through appropriate structures.”*

Taking this into account and following substantial consultation with the Forum of Postgraduate Training Bodies the approach set out below to Continuing Medical Education supports for Consultants is being adopted with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

**Key Principles** The following principles underlie the funding of CME by health employers:

- Consultant CME funding is a discrete budget item and it is not intended that this funding be allocated to make up deficits in other budgetary areas;
- The Consultant is best placed to evaluate and determine their own educational needs based on their scope of practice, service, education and health research;
- A revised CME structure must ensure that Consultants are facilitated to remain up to date with new systems and processes relevant to their work;
- A revised structure must provide for application and funding processes that are consistent nationally and ensure that all publically funded Consultants have access to supports;
- Application and funding processes must be as simple, clear and efficient as possible;
- The process must provide value for money;
- Guidelines for funding will be drafted in consultation with the Forum of Postgraduate Training Bodies and the relevant medical representative organisations; and
- Activities / items supported and funded at local level under this Scheme will be reported on a regular basis to the National HSE HR Directorate. All such submissions will require sign off by the relevant Clinical Director prior to submission.

**CME  
Application  
& Funding  
Process**

The CME application and funding process requires that:

- a. The attached single revised CME reimbursement form will be introduced nationally (and will be available to download online);
- b. All claimants must be registered on a Professional Competence Scheme with the relevant postgraduate training body in Ireland;
- c. Only activities which have or are seeking formal CME / CPD credits / content associated with them will be eligible for funding<sup>1</sup>;
- d. Claims must be submitted within 6 months of the financial liability being incurred by the applicant;
- e. A total funding amount of €3,000 per annum per Consultant will apply. This funding amount will apply equally to permanent appointees irrespective of whether they hold wholtime or part-time posts. Non-permanent Consultants will be entitled to claim to a funding amount pro-rata to the duration of their appointment.
- f. Funding held by Consultants as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 will rollover on a once-off basis. Such rolled over funding must be used in the following fashion – funding up to 2 years balance (i.e. €6000) must be used by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014, funding up to 3 years balance (i.e. €9000) must be used by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014. The 2014 funding amount of €3000 will become active on 1<sup>st</sup> January and will run parallel to rolled over funding.
- g. Funding will not rollover other than in the circumstances outlined in h) below or in the event the Consultant was unable to make use of CME funding arising from sick, maternity or other leave (not including annual leave) when processing applications. In no circumstances will funding rollover for more than 3 years.
- h. In very exceptional circumstances, the relevant Clinical Director / Hospital Manager / CEO may apply prospectively to the HSE MET Unit for funding in excess of this €3,000 per annum figure for an individual consultant or for approval for an individual consultant's fund to rollover for a maximum period of three years. Examples of such exceptional circumstances include service developments/up skilling required on foot of specific HSE Clinical Care Programme recommendations or in small specialties where it may not be feasible for individual consultants to attend specific educational events due to service delivery requirements and cover requirements. Applications made by Clinical Directors/ Hospital Managers / CEOs in these circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the HSE-MET Unit. A decision in this regard will be made no later than 60 days after the application has been lodged
- i. Taking account of the above, claims submitted for events which took place in the previous calendar year will be remitted only to the extent that the Consultant did not claim to the €3,000 amount in the previous calendar year. For example, if the Consultant submits a claim in Year B for an event which took place in Year A, reimbursement will be made only if the Consultant has not claimed to the full €3,000 amount in the previous year. Consultants are therefore encouraged to

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<sup>1</sup> Organisers and providers of educational activities / events must submit the content of their events to the relevant postgraduate training bodies for review and accreditation vis-à-vis the awarding or otherwise of CME/CPD credits. The booking process for courses/events may open prior to finalisation of this process. However at the time of submission for refund, CME/CPD credits associated with courses / events should have been determined and finalised by the relevant postgraduate training body. Where an activity / event is seeking CME / CPD credits is funded and does not subsequently acquire CME / CPD credits, any future funding for that activity / event will be contingent on a review and national authorisation by the HSE MET Unit.

seek prospective approval for events and submit claims within the same calendar year.

- j. CME applications must be certified by relevant local management as being in line with the schedule of items identified by the HSE as appropriate for support under the Consultant CME Scheme; Payment will be made within 60 days of application;
- k. The Consultant may appeal a decision to refuse funding to the Hospital CEO or General Manager. Should a further issue arise regarding non-payment of an item specified as eligible for reimbursement in this document, the matter can be referred to the Consultants' Grievance and Disputes procedure;
- l. The schedule of items to be supported by the HSE under this scheme will be subject to regular review by the HSE in consultation with the Forum of Irish Postgraduate Training Bodies and relevant medical representative organisations; and
- m. If a Consultant has a query regarding the eligibility or otherwise of an event / activity vis-à-vis reimbursement under this Scheme, they are advised to seek prior advice / input regarding same from local hospital management / relevant clinical director / consultant colleagues prior to incurring the relevant financial liability.

## National CME Guidelines

CLAIM CATEGORY 1 – COURSES AND CONFERENCES		
Only courses/conferences with or seeking appropriate national CPD/CME accreditation are eligible.		
Claim Type	Eligible for Reimbursement	NOT Eligible for Reimbursement
<b>Registration Fees</b>	<p>National and international Courses / conferences with appropriate CPD/CME accreditation / content related to the delivery of specialty</p> <p>E-learning courses provided there is a recognisable medical education component</p> <p>Meetings of Irish professional bodies directly concerning the management/organisation of CME/CPD in Ireland.</p>	<p>Annual or business meetings with no CME/CPD component</p> <p>Fees / expenses for social activities associated with the course</p> <p>Fees/expenses for persons accompanying claimants</p> <p>Medical Council registration fees</p>
Claim Type	Eligible for Reimbursement	NOT Eligible for Reimbursement
<p><b>Transportation</b> <i>Transportations costs associated with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses/conferences with appropriate CPD/CME accreditation</li> </ul>	<p>As per HSE travel policy, available at: <a href="http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/">http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/</a></p>	<p>As per HSE travel policy, available at: <a href="http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/">http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/</a></p> <p>Business / first class travel costs – costs will only be refunded at economy class rates</p>
<p><b>Accommodation</b> <i>Accommodation costs associated with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses/conferences with appropriate CPD/CME accreditation</li> </ul>	<p>As per HSE travel policy, available at: <a href="http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/">http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/</a></p>	<p>As per HSE travel policy, available at: <a href="http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/">http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/</a></p>

<p><b>Subsistence</b>  <i>Subsistence costs associate with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses/conferences with appropriate CPD/CME accreditation</li> </ul>	<p>As per HSE policy, available at:  <a href="http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/">http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/</a></p>	<p>As per HSE travel policy, available at:  <a href="http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/">http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/Benefits_Services/Travel_Subistence/</a></p>

**CLAIM CATEGORY 2 – REFERENCE MATERIALS**

Claim Type	Eligible for Reimbursement	NOT Eligible for Reimbursement
<p><b>Medical Journals and Textbooks</b></p>	<p>Purchase of medical journals and textbooks relevant to professional practice including management, ethics and statistics subject to availability of access to same on hospital / agency site</p> <p>Online subscriptions subject to availability of access to same on hospital / agency site</p> <p>Books or journals for use in patient education subject to availability of access to same on hospital / agency site</p>	<p>Non-medical books, journals, magazine subscriptions, etc</p> <p>Displays for office use (i.e. charts, posters, models etc) for which the HSE/employer already provides separate funding</p>
<p><b>Medical Education software</b></p>	<p>Computer software that has a CME/CPD component, e.g. statistical software, medical focused iPhone / Android apps etc</p> <p>HSE MET reserves the right to directly fund site purchase of computer hardware for CME / CPD purposes. Such funding will be in line with national medical education and training policy and final decision on allocation will rest with MET.</p>	<p>It is accepted that many Consultants undertake the majority of their CPD on their own time and from home but where possible the resources which are already provided by the employer should be used.</p> <p>Computer hardware, phones and associated devices other than as provided</p> <p>Computer software that does not have a CME component such as Microsoft Office, Adobe, billing software, etc</p> <p>Administrative office products such as dictation Software / devices, organisational software etc</p>

<b>CATEGORY 3 – PROFESSIONAL FEES</b>		
<b>Claim Type</b>	<b>Eligible for Reimbursement</b>	<b>NOT Eligible for Reimbursement</b>
<b>Professional Competence Registration Fee</b>	Annual registration fee for enrolment on a recognised Professional Competence Scheme in Ireland	Registration fee for professional competence scheme outside of Ireland except where it is not possible for the Consultant to be registered on a professional competence in Ireland for their specialty or subspecialty.
<b>Registration fees associated with professional memberships</b>	Annual registration fee for professional memberships	