

Policy on study leave

It is important to have a policy on study leave so that everyone has equal opportunities and study access, and it is given in an appropriate and equal manner. The practice should also provide some framework and record of all study leave undertaken by the staff to highlight areas of excellence within the practice and areas of deficit that need to be developed.

When compiling a policy on study leave, the following areas should be considered. There will be local variances depending on the size and location of the practice.

- *A study leave policy should allow time for study leave for continuing professional development. This should be additional to time allowed for mandatory updating (eg cardiopulmonary resuscitation training) that may be determined by the primary care trust (PCT).*
- *Study leave should be calculated on a pro-rata basis and there should be an equal entitlement for all members of staff, for example 5 days, unless there is a specific course or qualification that requires more than that to complete it, such as nurse prescribing, which includes a statutory 26 days of tuition.*
- *A policy should link study leave to the practice objectives, and may only allow attendance on courses and study days that are relevant to this. The needs and development of the individual should also be linked to this via the creation of an appropriate personal development plan.*
- *It is good practice for the individual attending a study event to provide some feedback to the rest of the practice team (as deemed relevant) to disseminate the knowledge gained and to help update others.*
- *The policy should include guidance on how to access funding for the study leave event (eg the PCT may be approached or workforce development directorate successor bodies etc).*
- *Nominating an educational or developmental lead for the practice is useful. This role can then co-ordinate all study leave requested and provided within the practice; the individual could sign-off all the study leave request forms with an awareness of consistency across the practice and ensure there is no duplication of education (unless this is planned and required). An annual report can then be produced to show what study has been accessed across the practice and to monitor the changes in practice that have occurred as a result.*

A standard study leave request form should be devised for use by all members of staff, including clarification of the purpose of the study leave and how these link to objectives for both the practice and the individual.