

How to justify your attendance at a Conference

Many budgets have been slashed, and NHS trusts and other healthcare providers are increasingly reducing or cutting training budgets to save costs. However your continuing professional development is important for your practice and future career. Conferences, professional seminars and workshops are a great way to keep yourself and your CPD updated.

If you feel that the training you receive at a conference is worth the cost, then you'll probably need to justify it. Conferences are especially difficult as there is the time off you'll need to attend, as well as the cost of travel and sometimes accommodation if it's not close to home. You need to prove the time away from your workplace is both value for money and will directly improve the care you provide your patients.

Benefits of participating in the conference

Here are some of the benefits of attending the RCN International Nursing Research Conference you may wish to flag with your employer:

- By supporting your attendance your employer is positively demonstrating their commitment to your continuing professional development. At this conference you can accrue up to 27 hours of CPD to count towards revalidation
- You will be updated on latest developments within nursing education and practice and consider how these will impact on you / your employer.
- Hear from eminent keynote speakers on current topics such as resilience in nursing; the changing shape of nursing practice, as well as hearing about the work of contemporaries in the UK and abroad.
- Discover how others are reacting to change and use their learning to reflect on what you can do to improve your own practice and be prepared for the future.
- With themed programme streams you can choose which sessions to attend and tailor your conference experience to your specific organisational needs
- Return to work inspired, with fresh ideas to share with your team and new networks to tap into for future development and collaboration.
- Attending and networking gives you a platform to showcase the work of your employer on a national level. With over 300 delegates last year, this is the UK's leading conference for those meeting challenges and making changes through an evidence based profession.

Some tips to consider...

Requesting the time – Use our letter of justification as a template to outline your objectives for attendance and the key learning outcomes making sure you relate these to improving best practice and patient care and provide the total cost of your attendance.

Attending the conference – Use the time at the conference to network and make new connections, picking up tips and sharing best practice.

Submit a paper or poster – Find out if the conference is accepting papers and consider submitting something. This will provide a better justification to your employer as your service will be showcased. Unsure if this isn't for you? View the posters and have a chat with other presenters to discuss your concerns.

Evaluate your time – spend some time during and after the conference writing notes and consolidating what you have learnt.

Update your CPD portfolio – All accredited courses or conferences will issue you with a certificate of attendance or completion. Make sure you transfer your reflections and learning's so you can validate your CPD.

Share best practice – Following the conference, distribute the information amongst your team, act on it and follow up showing your employer where improvements have been made as a result of the conference.

Highlight areas for improvement - This also allows you to highlight areas for improvements to ways of working and service delivery.

Disseminate the learning - Whenever you go to a conference give a presentation to your colleagues on what you've learned. By sharing the information, you reduce some of the jealousy felt because you got to go instead of them, and the training experience for others is invaluable. If you're uncomfortable in front of others, then just concentrate on providing a good report.

Implementation is key - Implement at least one performance change you've learned. Be sure to document the savings, and emphasise that this savings would not have been realised if you had not attended the conference.

Compare and contrast - If you're trying to justify the cost of a conference, simply compare it to almost any education course. RCN Events are almost always better value for money as we have an in-house team who have built up relationships with venues and suppliers to offer our service at the best possible price to you.

RCN Events

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