

NEW GUIDANCE ON SPA and ZERO DAYS updated March 2018

Supporting Professional Activities (SPA) Time for Trainees

Senior trainees (ST5-ST7) are eligible to apply for up to 8 days of SPA time per year. These should be evenly distributed over the year with a maximum of 2 days taken per 3-month block. Any SPA time taken will be appropriated from the study leave allocation and this will be reduced accordingly. Each trainee has an allocation of up to 30 days of study leave per training year and this will be reduced to 22 days if the full SPA allocation is taken. The allocation for LTFT trainees will be calculated on a pro-rata basis. SPA time is optional and trainees who do not wish to utilise it will not be disadvantaged in any way. There is no financial budget associated with SPA time.

The rationale for introducing SPA time includes:

- recognition of the contribution trainees make outside of the clinical setting
- encourage trainee involvement in research, audit and quality improvement
- allow time for trainees to work on publications and presentations

SPA time should be applied for in the same manner as study leave but clearly marked as a request for SPA time on the study leave form. The usual six-week notice must be given and the request will be subject to approval from the rota co-ordinator and at the discretion of the college tutor. The request may be refused if it is deemed unreasonable or it is felt to be at the expense of achieving core learning module outcomes.

Organising and managing your time is an essential part of being a senior trainee. Ideally you should discuss your plan for SPA sessions with your educational supervisor at the initial supervisor meeting. The time should be used effectively and trainees will be expected to provide supporting evidence if requested.

Below are some examples of what SPA time may be used for. This is not an exhaustive list and approval will remain at the discretion of the college tutor.

Examples of SPA Activity

Audit & QI Projects

Development of Guidelines

Research including online GCP Training

Publications (with appropriate senior guidance)

Preparation for regional/national presentations

Management – e.g. shadowing senior management and attending board meetings

Organising and running simulation sessions

Organising and running local teaching for medical students/junior trainees

Attending clinics at other trusts – e.g. CPEX clinic

Attending additional lists within sub-specialty interest

Attending to previously missed training opportunities

Working towards MSc/PgDip/PgCert

Guidance on Study Leave and Zero Days

The following principles apply:

The BMA state that trainees should have day returned for study leave on zero days

HENW also stated that to be the case

The School feels that zero days are rest days, and working on them even for study leave is exceeding your hours, and cannot be mandated and is therefore the choice of the individual trainee.

We have a responsibility as professional doctors, employees and learners to act in a sensible and pragmatic fashion to protect our own health and that of our patients.

Responsibilities:

College Tutors

All study leave should be booked 6 weeks prior to the start of the leave.

If a trainee has booked study leave in advance of the rota being written, and once the rota is released it falls on a zero day, the trainee must be offered a zero day in lieu for that study leave. It should be as soon as possible following the leave, but within 2 weeks of the study leave. All movement of zero days must be by negotiation between the trainee and the department.

If a trainee books study leave that falls on a zero day, after the rota has been written, but 6 weeks in advance of the leave, then a lieu day should be given within 2 weeks of the leave.

Study leave booked with less than 6 weeks may result in a lieu day may not being granted.

If a trainee decides to go on study leave on a zero day, and requests a lieu day in retrospect, that will NOT be granted.

Equally, if the department has changed the rota at short notice and a rest day is disrupted by study leave, that zero day should be paid back as soon as possible.

Trainees

Responsible for ensuring you organise your study leave 6 weeks in advance, and negotiate lieu days before the study leave is taken.

Responsible to ensure that there is adequate balance between Clinical Experience and Study Leave. Requirements for competencies for Completion of Units of Training should be set out in discussion with your Educational Supervisor, and appraisal of your portfolio and logbook numbers.

Guidance on Study Leave and LTFT Training

An additional consideration will apply to Less Than Full Time Trainees

- 1) LTFT trainees have regular working and non-working days, and zero days to balance average working hours
- 2) Trainees work LTFT for many reasons
- 3) Allowing reorganisation of non-working days for study leave may enable the LTFT trainee to reorganise regular fixed commitments, avoiding additional costs for study leave (e.g. childcare, counselling, hospital appointments)

If a LTFT trainee applies for Study Leave on a non-working day, the above guidance will similarly apply. Non-working days for LTFT trainees should be considered in the same way as zero days.