GUIDELINE TITLE:	Document No:
Nursing Practice Guideline on Study Leave and Funding	Version No: 2 (Merge)

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1.0 GUIDELINE STATEMENT

Children's Health Ireland[1] recognises the importance of supporting continuing professional development to enable nurses to meet the ever evolving needs of the children's healthcare environment and to provide a safe, high quality nursing service to children and their families. Under the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011 (Government of Ireland 2011), professional development is the responsibility of both the individual nurse and their employing organisation. CHI is committed to developing nurses to enable them to achieve their full potential, not only in the early stages of their career but throughout their employment.

CHI will also fulfil any potential requirements for nurse education that may be required within the context of any changes to nursing legislation. These study days may be used to undertake education, training, development or to attend seminars and conferences relevant to the nurse's professional development and are dependent on local service need. To achieve this, it is necessary to establish a standardised application and approval procedure for the granting of study leave and funding. Funding is decided by a group of nurses of all grades who decide on the applications made for funding in a collaborative manner.

Funding is still varied across CHI as the original sites funding was based on geographical location.

Location	Funding source
CHI Temple street	NMPDU North
CHI Connolly	NMPDU North
CHI Crumlin	NMPDU South
CHI Tallaght	Funded by percentage of the TUH budget

When the new hospital opens the funding stream will be from the NMPDU South.

2.0 PURPOSE:

The following guidelines are intended to provide a framework to guide all nursing staff and their managers regarding the allocation of study leave and, where necessary, associated funding for continuing education, training and development. The guidelines will assist CHI to maintain a consistent and equitable approach to decisions regarding allocation of funding and study leave for training, education and professional development.

3.0 SCOPE:

These guidelines are applicable to All nurses across the CHI.

4.0 DEFINITIONS / ABBREVIATIONS:

For the purposes of this guideline, the following definitions will apply:

Learning:	An end result or outcome, defined as a change in perspective or capability (behaviour, knowledge or attitude) whether of individuals, teams or the organisation as a whole
eLearning:	Learning that is achieved, supported and managed through the use of electronic information provision, services and systems.
Blended Learning:	The thoughtful integration of face-to-face learning experiences with online
Continuous Professional Development (CPD):	Encompasses experiences, activities and processes that contribute towards the development of staff. CPD is, therefore, a lifelong process of both structured and informal learning.
Training:	The acquisition of skills to a set standard, through instruction and practice, and takes a short term approach. It is usually concerned with improving capability of how something is done and covers business, technical and professional knowledge and skills.
Mandatory Training:	Mandatory training is defined as any training that is deemed to be required by an organisation based on the policies, procedures and guidelines of that organisation and appropriate to an employee's role and area of work.

5.0 ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Nurse	5.2 Department heads	5.3 Divisional Nurse Manager/Lead	5.4 Director of Nursing/Directorate Nurse Lead
It is the responsibility of all nurses to: • Take responsibility for identifying and maintaining their own CPD including records of same. • Participate in the personal and professional development planning process. • Attend all mandatory training as appropriate to their role. • Bring to the attention of their line manager any perceived learning and development needs. • Attend in full and participate in any learning and development activity arranged to meet their needs. • Evaluate the quality and effectiveness of any learning and development activity that they have participated in. • Share knowledge/skills gained from learning and development that they have undertaken. • Apply their new skills/knowledge in the workplace. • Apply for study leave and funding using the relevant application process. • Where funding is allocated to a nurse, s/he will comply with the principles indicated in this guideline.	• Ensure that nurses are aware of this guideline. • Ensure that nurses complete the Leave & Funding application form. Line Managers review and decide to approve or reject the application. If approved the Line Manager forwards to the Divisional Nurse Manager/Directorate Nurse Lead. • Ensure that all nurses within their area(s) of responsibility attend all relevant mandatory and statutory training. • Regularly review the learning and development needs of all nurses within their area(s) of responsibility through the personal and professional development planning process. • Ensure that all nurses in their area(s) of responsibility have equal access to learning and development opportunities • Ensure that all non-attendance at learning & development initiatives is monitored on a regular basis and that systems are in place locally to follow up non-attendance with nurses • Facilitate the participation of nurses in learning and development initiatives while addressing any potential for impact on service delivery; • Retain records of personal development planning and learning and development activity within their department.	• Consider and approve/decline (with clear rationale) applications from nurses as recommended by line management to participate in learning & development initiatives. • Ensure that learning and development activities fall within the allocated budget • Analyse information from audits, patient feedback and incidents and use this to inform strategic direction for learning and development within their division • Monitor attendance at mandatory training and take action if/where there is unsatisfactory compliance • Review and approve annual departmental learning and development plans ensuring they are linked to the objectives of the hospital and the CHI.	• Be the final decision-maker with respect to the approval of study leave and/or funding • Ensure that learning and development activities fall within the allocated budget • Analyse information from • Audits, patient feedback and incidents and use this to inform strategic direction for learning and development within the hospital and the CHI • Monitor attendance at mandatory training and take action if/where there is unsatisfactory compliance • Review and approve annual departmental learning and development plans ensuring they are linked to the objectives of the hospital and the CHI.

6.0 OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To ensure all nurses are clear on the process for study leave application and approval
Objective 2: To ensure all nurses are clear on the process for funding approval for education
Objective 3: To ensure transparency and equity in this process across CHI

7.0 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Nursing staff will have a clear process in the objectives borne out by compliance.

8.0 GUIDELINE STEPS

Guiding Principles for the allocation of study leave and funding

8.1 Overarching principles
• Study leave allowances and the allocation of funding are guidelines, not entitlements, and are discretionary.
• Funding for courses and the allocation of study leave is granted on the basis of available resources, years of service, service need and career path requirement. Priority for study leave and funding will be given for courses which are essential for service provision and the priorities of the hospital and CHI.
• Professional development will include an element of personal development but should in some way contribute to improving the quality of service provided.
• When the term "study day" is used, this refers to a 7. 5 hour day. For staff working part time hours or job-sharing all leave is granted pro rata.

8.2 Allocation of study leave and funding
• Allocation of study leave and funding is based on timely submission of the application, presentation of relevant supporting documentation and subsequent approval by the appropriate line manager.
• The level of funding is at the discretion of the Director, strictly subject to the availability of funding. A Director may approve 100% funding where there is a service requirement for advancement of individual staff in a particular role and/or skill.
• Priority for study leave and funding will be given for courses which are essential for service provision and the organisation.

8.3 Conditions for the allocation of study leave and funding
▪ Applications for study leave and funding for courses will only be considered when submitted via the appropriate electronically links Formstack (Crumlin, Temple Street and Connolly) and Sharepoint (Tallaght)
▪ All staff must have completed a probationary period of six months in post before study leave will be considered (apart from in-house mandatory study days). *(Exceptions to this will be based on a decision by senior nursing management.)*
▪ All mandatory and statutory in-service training must be prioritized and must be up to date before consideration will be given to requests for study leave or funding. You will be refused funding if Mandatory and statutory training is not up to date.
▪ Applicants for study leave and / or funding will produce evidence of their up to date compliance with mandatory and statutory training.
▪ Applications for funding and study leave must be submitted yearly if the course duration is longer than one year (with the exception of the Graduate Diplomas in Specialist Practice Areas) electronically on Form stack.
▪ Funding is only considered for course fees and it does not include additional costs such as registration, books, study materials, unless these are specifically included in the overall course fees.

9.0 Sharing of Learning

Staff undertaking a course with a research component will be requested to choose a topic relevant to their work / department. Subject matter should be discussed with CNM, DNM and NPDU.

- Staff will be expected to feedback to the organisation following the course completion. This feedback will be in the form of informal feedback (orally or in writing or presentations) to colleagues for conference visits or formal feedback in the case of higher Diplomas and Masters programmes or any study that requires project work.
- Publication of research should be considered. The hospital would support such publication through the Nursing Research structures.

10.0   Applying for Study Leave and Funding

Step-by-Step Process this process will be electronic but will follow the principles below

1. Discuss the planned study leave + funding with relevant line manager. This must be done **before** submitting an application. **Note:** Retrospective applications for leave or funding will not be considered.
2. Complete Application Form For Study Leave and Funding via the electronic application form on formstack for all sites other than Tallaght. https://chiattemplestreet.formstack.com/forms/chi_nursing_study_application
   Applicants from Tallaght will apply using sharepoint. Applications for study leave and funding for courses will only be considered when accompanied by:
   o   outline of course content
   o   confirmation of fees / costs
   o   **For Higher Education programmes:** evidence of compliance with mandatory training and evidence of study leave granted in the preceding 3 years.
3. Application form to Line Manager will be auto-completed
4. Line Manager reviews the application and approves or declines
5. Once approved by line manager, the line manager inputs the Assistant Directorate Nurse Lead/ADON the email, they will receive the electronically application for review
6. The ADON approves or declines study leave in accordance with the allowances identified and approves short term funding if there is an identified funding source.
7. Decisions about funding for Higher Education programmes are made at Local Higher Education Review Group on a yearly basis.
8. Outcome of application is communicated in writing by Directorate Nurse Leads/Director of Nursing's Office to the applicant and their line manager.
   Notes*:*
   - The application must be submitted before the closing date for applications-
   - The Nurse Manager will consider the request for study leave with due consideration of the i) course content, ii) relevance to the specialty / service need/ grade of the individual Registered Nurse and iii) previous study leave. These criteria will be determined on an individual basis.
   Please note…. Funding for programmes is different in TUH with the application form and links through Sharepoint for all programmes other than single day programmes.

Note
- *Long term study leave and funding is calculated over the academic year – September to August*
- *When considering undertaking a programme all the time required will not be provided by the organisation, there will be a requirement for you to use some of your own personal time to manage the workload.*

10.1 Step by step process

Step 1: Entry Step Applicant completes request

Step 2: Line manager Approval **ASSIGNED VIA FORM FIELD: CLICK LINK** Please confirm Line manager email address

Step 3: ADON manager Approval **ASSIGNED VIA FORM FIELD: CLICK LINK** Please confirm ADON Email

Step 4 DON approval

10.2 Time allocated for study leave

Course Type	Proposed Allowances across CHI
All allowances based on 'Up to a maximum of x days/year'	All days are 7.5hours
Stand-Alone Modules	4 days
Nurse Prescriber for Medical preparations Nurse Referring for Radiological Procedures	7 days
Primary Degree Grad Certificate	7 days
Foundation programmes PICU over nine months – more class days as per programme Neonatal over six months	6days 8 days as per programme (PICU programme is longer) 6 days
Post Graduate Diploma	10 days
Year 2 Masters (after completion of PG Diploma as Year 1)	5 days

Masters Level 9 (2 years)	15 days over two years (no more than 10 days in Year 1)
ANP Programmes	As per programme must have all college days
PhD	Arranged locally

Exceptions include courses etc requested by the organisation or required for service need

10.3 Other study leave		
Mandatory and statutory	**Short term study leave**	**Long term study leave**
Mandatory and statutory education includes but is not limited to, for example, hand hygiene training, Child Protection, fire safety, patient moving and handling, intravenous Study Day. Refer to the CHI list of Mandatory training for requirements.	This includes for example, single study days, conference attendance.	This study leave is for higher level education programmes such as Degree, post-graduate or masters programme.
Study leave is allocated to enable nurses fulfil their mandatory and statutory education and training requirements.	Up to 3 days per annum paid leave may be granted by the organisation, upon consideration of the nature of the request and the study leave previously allocated to the application. These days are allocated on a pro rata basis.	The allowances that are detailed below are allocated on a pro rata basis.
The amount of leave allocated may differ between clinical services due to the particular mandatory requirements for nurses to undertake education and training to support the delivery of safe quality care.	Short term study leave is calculated over a calendar year, i.e. January to December.	

10.4 Online learning

Where possible nursing staff should complete online learning programmes within the working day (programmes will be supported by the nursing service where reasonable and practicable.). Where this is not possible or does not occur, the staff member must produce evidence of programme completion. Subsequently, the CNM will at his / her discretion provide time in lieu in the working roster.

10.5 Exceptions to study leave
Exceptions to the defined period of study leave may be considered in the following instances:
• If, with the approval of the DON and DNM, particular service requirements necessitate the reduction or extension of the amount of study leave
• Site visits to other healthcare institutions deemed necessary to the ongoing and future development of CHI
• Clinical placements which are requirements of specialist programmes will be facilitated within existing staff complements.
• Study days which are specifically requested by senior nursing management (i.e. DNM/DON).

10.6 Non approval of application for study leave and funding
- A clear rationale for the decision of the CHI to not support the application must be communicated to the applicant.
- Should a nurse disagree with the outcome of the approval process, s/he may appeal this decision to their DNM. The final decision with regard to the approval of study leave and/or funding lies with the Director of Nursing.

11.0   COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

All registered nurses will have access to this document and will be included as part of the ward orientation on wards caring for children post-surgical interventions. This document will be used as part of the ward induction process. Staff will be made aware of the document.

12.0 COMPLIANCE MONITORING

- This guideline shall be reviewed and updated at least every three years by the Author in order to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. It shall be assessed and amended as necessary during this period to reflect any changes in best practice, law, substantial organisational change and professional or academic change.
- Monitoring and evaluation will be evident in compliance with the guideline and adherence to the steps outlined.

13.0 APPROVAL:

Proposed: Nursing Practice Development Coordinators	February 2024
Approved: Nursing Documentation Approval Committee	March 2024

14.0 VERSION CONTROL HISTORY:

Revision Number	Summary of changes/ Reason for change	Section ref:	Author:
1	Merge of documents across CHI	All	NPDCs

15.0 References and bibliography

Health Service Executive (2024) *HSE Study Leave Policy,* Accessed on 18.03.2024

https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/leave/study-leave/

16.0 16.0 Guideline Development Group/Stakeholders

Development Group/ Key Stakeholders	Approval date
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