

Frequently asked questions

These are provided for guidance or quick reference guide only, so always refer to the policy

1. General Definitions

1.1 What types of development activity does this policy allow me to do?

This policy offers you the opportunity to apply for funding support for formal academic qualifications as well as informal skills training courses and conferences. Examples of development activities that have been supported previously include:

- Apprenticeships
- Foundation degrees
- Bachelor degrees
- Postgraduate qualifications
- Masters degrees
- Taught Doctorates
- Study for primary qualifications relevant for professional membership or leading to registration – e.g. CIPD Graduate status, CIMA, HCPC registration
- Study for professional certificates and diplomas awarded by a recognised professional body
- Professional training portfolios.

Organisation and Workforce Development (OWD) are available to support you through any questions regarding the appropriateness of your chosen development activity. You can contact OWD via [HRDirect](#)

1.2 Can I request support for any development activity?

Your request must be linked to the personal and/or professional development required for delivering your day to day job role or an aspiring job role agreed with your manager. Examples of activities include those that:

- are considered vital for your role
- are Essential or desirable for your job role as indicated within your Person Specification or recruitment profile
- are identified as part of your Personal Development Plan (PDP) to support development of your job-specific knowledge, skills and/or behaviours
- are identified with your manager, outside the PDPR process, to support development of your job-specific knowledge, skills, and/or behaviours
- fulfil your Continuing Personal and Professional Development (CPPD) commitment
- enhance your knowledge, skills and behaviours in an area relevant to your job role or an aspiring job role
- meet the strategic objectives of the organisation
- develop your knowledge, skills, and behaviours to find an alternative job role where you are put at risk as part of a formal change programme

1.3 What does locally supported mean?

The training budget within your department/directorate supports your activity

1.4 What does centrally supported mean?

The central training budget is held by Organisation and Workforce Development (OWD) and supports your activity.

1.5 What is the Support for Development Panel?

This Panel is a group of Senior Managers representing all directorates in NHSBT that meets annually.

1.6 What is the Senior Management Team (SMT)?

These are the Senior Managers within your directorate, who meet regularly as a team, normally monthly.

1.7 Who should I contact if I have a query regarding my development activity?

You should contact your manager or [HR Direct](#)

1.8 Who maintains records for Medical Study leave and approved activities?

Records of your study leave and entitlements are kept by the Medical Directorate and are available on request. You should e mail : Medical Development Support and Study Leave with details of your request.

1.9 What is the definition of 'vital'?

Vital development is the personal and/or professional development required for delivering your day to day job role. Specifically, it is the development which is necessary for you to effectively perform your existing job role e.g. essential or desirable based on your person. Vital development therefore relates to the development that you need to:

- gain job-specific knowledge vital to carry on your role
- gain job-specific skills vital to carry on your role
- carry out your job role within our legal and/or regulatory frameworks

Vital means that you will be unable to carry out your job due to changes in legal or regulatory frameworks or because of a significant change in an area related to your role.

The definition of vital will require the support of your senior management team *and* the support of the Support for Development Panel. The panel will make the final decision on whether 100% funding is approved or not and may require further documentation/business case if this is not clear with the application.

Should you or your manager be unsure of what is considered vital or non-vital, contact [HRDirect](#)

2. Funding

2.1 Will the funding support approval process differ for part-time and full-time employees?

No difference will be made between part-time and full-time staff applications. All staff, part-time or full-time, will be given equal access to the funding support.

2.2 How much funding support will I receive and when can I submit my application?

The funding approved will be subject to funds being available. The amount supported is dependent upon the cost of the development activity and whether or not it is vital for your role.

Applications under £900 can be submitted at any time. They will be considered locally by your senior leader throughout the year.

Funding support for development activities costing under £900 will be approved **up to** 100%.

Applications over £900 can be submitted at any time. They will be considered annually, with a 31st March cut-off, by the OWD support for development panel

Funding support for development activities costing over £900 are dependent upon whether the development activity is vital to your role

Vital development

- 100% funding will be approved for all development activities that are considered **vital** for you to carry out your day to day job role.

Non-vital development

For other development activities, a personal percentage contribution of 25% will apply.

The funding approved represents the **total** funding allocated to you by NHSBT and you are expected to make arrangements to meet the remaining costs by paying the provider directly. Your department is therefore not permitted to 'top-up' your percentage funding using their own departmental training budget. Any such 'top-ups' will be highlighted by the Finance department and reported to OWD for resolve.

2.3 What costs does the final approval decision support?

Your final approval decision will fund the activities registration fee, examination fees. Fees that are excluded from your final funding support are:

- Travel and accommodation costs (these should be funded by your department budget with prior approval)
- student union membership fees
- fees relating to membership of a professional body or society
- fees relating to development resources e.g. books
- fees and costs associated with graduation ceremonies or award presentations
- dissertation costs e.g. testing kits (these should be funded by your department budget with prior approval)

3. Criteria used by manager

3.1 What criteria are used by my manager to agree to endorse my application?

Your manager must endorse your application. Your manager should consider the following points when discussing the application with you: -

	Questions
1	Do you demonstrate the organisational values i.e. Caring, Expert, and Quality?
2	Have you completed your MT
3	If you are a manager, your employees should have completed their MT and have a current PDPR
4	Is the development activity captured in your PDPR/PDP
5	Is the development required for personal or departmental development and has consideration been given to how the development will help you to do your job role better i.e. what skill, knowledge, and/or behaviour gap will be filled by the development activity
6	Is the development based on reasonable adjustment or support through change
7	Is the development appropriate to your job role or an aspiring job role in NHSBT/NHS
8	Have travel and accommodation costs been planned for
9	Have alternative, more cost-effective development opportunities been considered with costs and types of study and compared (benefit vs. risk)
10	Has the sharing of learning, following the development activity, been agreed

11	Does the development meet local workforce/succession arrangements as discussed with a senior manager
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3.2 What criteria are used to approve applications under £900?

Development support activities under £900 will be funded locally and your manager and appropriate budget holder are responsible for authorising and funding this support. Your manager and budget holder will use the following criteria when approving your application.

	Questions	Yes	No
1	Has the application been completed fully	Continue to question 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to applicant for completion
2	Has the application been endorsed	Continue to question 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to applicant for completion
3	Has an initial development assessment been completed with application	Continue to question 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to applicant for completion
4	Has the applicant completed their MT and PDPR	Continue to question 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding denied. Application will need resubmitting when training complete
5	Where applicant is a manager, have their direct reports completed their MT and PDPR	Continue to question 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding denied. Application will need resubmitting when training complete
6	Is the development appropriate to the applicant's banding (see role profile/qualification grid where available)	Continue to question 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding denied. Follow-up questions may be appropriate
7	Does the development activity meet an identified skill, knowledge and/or behavioural gap within the organisation	Continue to question 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding denied. Follow-up questions may be appropriate
8	Is there evidence of how the learning will be shared within the team/organisation	Funding approved up to 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding denied. Follow-up questions may be appropriate

3.3 What criteria are used by my Directorate's Senior Management Team to approve applications over £900?

Development support activities over £900 will be funded centrally through OWD following approval from your Directorate's senior management team and the Support for Development Panel (SDP). Your senior management team and OWD will use the following criteria when approving your application.

	Questions	Yes	No
1	Does application show signs of manager discussion against the approval criteria	Continue to question 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> application declined Follow-up discussion required with endorsing manager
2	Has senior/budgetary manager endorsed application	Continue to question 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> application declined Follow-up discussion required with endorsing senior manager
3	Is the development appropriate to the applicant's banding (see role profile/qualification grid where available)	Continue to question 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> application declined Alternative development recommended to applicant

4	Has the development been linked to the strategic objectives	Continue to question 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application declined • Alternative development recommended to applicant
5	Does the applicant meet national workforce planning/succession arrangements	Approved and application passed to SDP. Percentage allocation set.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application declined • Alternative development recommended to applicant

3.4 What criteria are used by my manager to endorse my overseas application?

Your Budget manager must endorse all overseas applications. Your manager should consider the following points when discussing the overseas application with you (at least two of the following criteria must apply): -

	Questions
1	External funding is provided in substantial part, or in full
2	You are an invited speaker
3	You are the lead author on an abstract that has NHSBT Line manager approval and has been accepted by the conference organisers
4	The event is a planned part of your CPD programme/Personal Development Plan (PDP), and there is an auditable link to that PDP
5	You are a member of the Organising Committee, or a member of an International Working Party that is meeting at or presenting at the event and has manager's approval to act in this capacity
6	You are a member of JPAC or a UK SAC and is attending a meeting of direct relevance to the work of that committee and will be feeding back to the SAC/JPAC on one or more specific topics
7	You are using the opportunity to participate in other relevant international meetings whilst at the event
8	The applicant will be disseminating the knowledge gained at the event through: i) Articles; ii) Presentations to NHSBT colleagues (lunchtime or other); iii) Other media
9	You have not been to another international event for at least 36 months (or you are a scientist or clinician with a regular requirement for attendance at overseas conferences identified in your Job Description, at 12 months)
10	For doctors, not in a research role: one international meeting every two years and one national meeting in the intervening year as a minimum
11	For doctors in a research role: at least one international meeting/year. Such doctors should include provision for conference travel in grant applications.

3.5 What assurance is available regarding the equity of funding decisions?

The Staff Engagement Forum, which has members of management and Staff side, via OWD, will monitor funding support data at both an Organisational and Directorate level. Specifically, the data will be analysed to identify access trends that suggest inequality. The engagement forum will review the data twice a year and appropriate actions will be taken as necessary. Such actions will subsequently be managed through the OWD Senior Management Team.

4. Overseas Travel

4.1 What should I consider when travelling within Europe?

NHSBT provides insurance cover for emergency medical and dental treatment costs incurred by employees whilst overseas on NHSBT business.

If you are travelling overseas you should familiarise yourself with the insurance details prior to travelling, which are available from [HR Direct](#).

You must ensure that you apply for and take with you your valid [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) when travelling on business overseas.

We do not provide any normal Travel Insurance cover. Therefore, you will need to check to ensure that you are covered, or consider taking out a policy for this. This type of insurance does NOT cover Medical issues, and is usually for costs associated with lost luggage, theft etc.

4.2 When should I submit my application for overseas course/conference or study related travel?

Applications for attendance at overseas events should be submitted no later than 3 months prior to the event.

5.0 Expenses

5.1 How do I claim the costs of my development?

Once your application has been approved you will receive a terms and conditions agreement which will include a letter to your college/university advising payment arrangements.

When the invoice receive is received from your course provider, the purchase order will be raised by OWD.

If your funding is for less than 100% it is your responsibility to make arrangements to pay the remaining costs by paying the provider direct.

5.2 Who will fund my examination re-sit or associated costs?

You are responsible for any repeat attendance or examination re-sits costs unless you have evidence of mitigating circumstances.

5.3 Will I be able to claim expenses for travel and accommodation for my development activity?

Expenses associated with approved development activity should be discussed and agreed with your manager at the time you complete your application. Agreed expenses will be paid subject to the Travel and Expenses Policy.

6 Starting the activity

6.1 When can I register on my development activity?

Once you have received your final approval decision in writing, you will then be able to register and confirm your place with the development provider. You will be liable for any booking costs incurred that you have made prior to receiving confirmation of funding approval.

6.2 Will I be able to gain funding support after I have started or completed my development activity?

Funding support will not be approved outside the Support for Personal and Professional Development Policy and it is therefore unlikely that funding support will be approved in hindsight of you starting or completing a development activity. Should you wish to enrol with a provider prior to gaining your approval, you should do so on the understanding that this does not commit us to funding the development activity and therefore you will be responsible for any costs you incur.

7. Changes to Personal Circumstances

7.1 How much will I have to repay if I leave the organisation?

Should you leave the organisation within 36 months of completing your development programme, you will be liable to repay some or all of the costs. The following repayment criteria will be used:

- If you leave the organisation within 12 months of completing your development programme then the full costs must be repaid.
- If you leave the organisation within 24 months, 50% of the financial assistance must be repaid
- If you leave the organisation within 36 months, 25% of the financial assistance must be repaid.

The repayment costs apply whether you leave to join another NHS organisation or a non-NHS organisation. Mitigating circumstances can be applied through the OWD funding panel.

7.2 How will I make repayments if I leave?

Once your notification of leaving (ESR-FRM-097) is submitted by your manager to NHSBT Pay Support all relevant directorates will be notified to ensure that a check is made for any monies you owe us. NHSBT Pay Support and/or Financial Services will liaise with you directly to agree how the monies are to be re-paid back to us in a formally agreed payment plan.

Should you not adhere to the agreed payment plan or you do not respond or acknowledge the request for payment by Financial Services, then your case will be passed to our Solicitors for further action.

NB: This will also include tracing you if you have moved away from the listed address held in our employment records.

If no agreement is made, then the case will be referred to the local County Court for further action.

This will provide you an opportunity to offer a defence to the County Court and for us to respond.

Should you ignore or default any contract or agreements made through the County Court, then full legal proceedings will commence leading to County Court Judgements (CCJ'S) being placed on your credit file and will remain there along with any court fees incurred until the debt is paid in full.

7.3 What happens with my funding support if I fail or withdraw from my approved development activity?

Should you fail or withdraw early from the approved development activity without mitigating circumstances, we may claim any or part of the sum we have invested in the development activity from you. The funding panel will make repayment decisions on an individual basis based on your case for mitigation. The amount you must repay will be based on the last year of study fees that we have paid.

7.4 What classes as a mitigating circumstance?

Mitigating circumstances are those events which are unforeseen or unpreventable. Examples may include redundancy, maternity, ill-health or bereavement. To apply for exclusion of reimbursement of fees due to mitigating circumstances, you must contact your manager who will forward your request to your SMT and OWD for consideration.

8. Time off Work

8.1 What time off can I have to attend my development activity?

Any time off required for your development activity must be agreed upfront with your manager at the time of application to ensure a fair balance is given to your needs and that of your department and colleagues. This time may be agreed as paid or unpaid, in line with the Time Off Work Policy. It is anticipated that all face to face development activities be approved as paid time-off work and that it meets European Time Directive standards for rest periods. To ensure this is the case, you should discuss with your manager in advance where your working hours need to be rearranged e.g. if you are a shift or night worker requiring attendance at a daytime activity. Where the development activity is distance learning, it is recommended that one day per module be agreed as paid time-off work.

It is also expected that you commit personal time to your studies in addition to work time; a 50:50 ratio is a reasonable proportion of study time allocation in most cases and is a good base for consideration when discussing your application with your manager.

8.2 What if I am unable to attend my approved development activity?

You are expected to attend the development activity that you have been funded to attend. If, due to mitigating circumstances, you are unable to attend the activity you must inform your manager immediately. Your manager should decide whether a substitute can be arranged to attend the event or if the booking should be cancelled. Your manager must inform HRDirect@nhsbt.nhs.uk of any changes to the application. Any charges for non-attendance or cancellation of the development activity will be cross-charged to your manager's budget.

8.3 What additional support will I receive during my development?

Once funding approval is confirmed, you are expected to transfer your learning back into the organisation with the support from your manager during regular reviews of your learning. The support should take place before, during, and after your development. To help you prepare for these support sessions, you should reflect using the questions below.

- Pre-programme one to one session –
 1. What do you hope to learn from your chosen development activity?
 2. How will the learning help you to do your job better?
 3. How do you plan to share your learning with others?
- Mid-programme one to one session *(if programme is over more than 5 days)* –
 1. What have you learned on your development programme to date?
 2. How have you/do you plan to use your new learning within your job role?
 3. What support do you need to help you apply your learning?
- Post-programme one to one session –
 1. What were the main learning points from your development programme?
 2. How have you/do you plan to use your new learning within your job role?
 3. What support do you need to help you apply your learning?
 4. How can you share your learning with others in the department?
 5. What additional personal development, if any, have you identified since completing the development programme?

9. Research and Development Students

9.1 Do I need ethical approval?

Depending on the research, this could be either **University** or **NHS Ethics**. Your supervisor and higher education institution will be able to guide you as to which is more appropriate. There is also an online guide to assess the need for [NHS Ethics](#) If it is determined that your project requires NHS Ethics, this must be sought through the [Integrated Research Application S](#)

[system](#) (IRAS). The Research and Development Office can guide applicants through the IRAS form if required and can provide the key information for Research and Development Contacts.

If your project requires NHS Ethics, you may have to attend a Research Ethics Committee (REC) meeting. These committees are based regionally and some specialise topics. Approval from a REC is given on a National basis; therefore, although you may need to seek local approval to carry out your project, you will only need to seek ethical approval once.

More information on RECs, and seeking NHS Ethics can be found here: <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/>

9.2 How do I gain ethics approval for my dissertation?

If your application is for a development activity which requires a research project or dissertation you must ensure that you complete a Research Project Proposal Form before starting the project. You must allow sufficient time for any research proposal to be reviewed and approved by the Research and Development department at R&Doffice@nhsbt.nhs.uk. It is important to factor in the time it can take (up to three months) to obtain all the necessary approvals in to your project timelines.

9.3 When should I apply for Research and Development approval?

We recommend that you contact the Research and Development Office as soon as you have identified that you will be doing a project. Although Research and Development approval is the last approval that will be granted, starting the process early will ensure that once all other approvals are in place, approval can be given promptly.

9.4 Is my project classed as research?

To work out what approvals will be required, you must ascertain if your project is categorised as 'research'. The Health Research Authority (HRA) has [an online tool](#) for defining whether a project is research. If your project is defined as research, then it may be necessary to obtain ethical approval.

9.5 How do I obtain Research and Development approval?

The following documents must be submitted to the Research and Development inbox (research.office@nhsbt.nhs.uk):

- A Research Project Proposal Form
- Your signed Development Activity Support Approval Form
- A project outline, or draft protocol
- The outcome page of the '[is my project research](#)' questionnaire, and where necessary the outcome from the '[do I need ethical approval](#)' questionnaire

The Research and Development Office will assess to your application to ensure it is categorised as 'research' or 'service evaluation' or 'audit'. This will be based on the information that you submit to us.

To gain approval, it will require approval from the relevant strategy group that your project is aligned to. If your project could have an impact on patients or donors, you may also require approval from the relevant Clinical Audit, Risk and Effectiveness (CARE) group.

If you are unsure which strategy group your project is aligned to, the Research and Development Office can offer assistance, and will inform the relevant personnel of your project.

If your proposal is expected to impact on the donation, retrieval and/ or transplantation process, you may require approval from the Research, Innovation and Novel Technologies Advisory Group (RINTAG). Approval should be sought by prospective applicants wishing to obtain access to organ donors and/or "relevant material" for research purposes. It is also required for proposals impacting Specialist Nurse – Organ Donation (SNODs) or National Organ Retrieval Service (NORS) teams.

9.6 When will I get Research and Development Approval?

You will receive approval once the Research and Development Office is reassured that you have all necessary approvals for your project. By seeking reassurance that your project is strategically aligned and in line with business objectives, approval will be granted knowing that the project will not have a negative impact on the wider NHSBT.

9.7 What do I do when I have finished my project?

Ensure that you inform the Research and Development Office when you have finished your project, or if you anticipate delays in completing your project once you have reached your expected end date. If your project has produced results which may lead to a change in policy or practise, or if you intend to publish the results of your project it is important that you inform the Research and Development Office.

10. Policy Approval and Review

Policy version	Related document to UCD/People/Development/030v2.4
Title	UCD/People/Development/030v2.4/FAQsv2.3
Approved by SPC	January 2018
Equality Impact Assessment completed	N/A
Counter Fraud check	N/A
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