

**NHS EDUCATION FOR SCOTLAND (NES)**

**Postgraduate Medical and Dental Training: Study Leave Policy and Operational Guide**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. This policy and operational guide is underpinned by the provisions contained within:

[The Gold Guide \(Reference Guide for Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK: 10<sup>th</sup> edition, 2024\)](#)

[The Dental Gold Guide \(September 2023 edition\)](#)

[Hospital Medical and Dental Staff...Terms and Conditions of Service \(2003\)](#)

[GP Training Contract & Terms and Conditions \(2011\)](#)

## **A. PRINCIPLES**

### **KEY PRINCIPLES**

2. Doctors and dentists in training\*, in conjunction with their TPDs (Training Programme Directors)/ FPDs (Foundation Programme Directors)/ CTAs (Core Training Advisors); have access to a standard system in which applications for study leave are considered on a fair, equitable and consistent basis.

3. Doctors and dentists in training\* should develop coherent plans for study leave in the context of their training programme and curricular requirements. They must take into account their individual educational needs as agreed with their TPD / FPD / CTA and/or Educational Supervisors.

[\*This group includes all public health specialty trainees]

4. Study leave activity should enhance clinical education and training, with activities planned in advance so as to avoid disruption to services. This should be done in conjunction with both service colleagues / units and TPD / FPD / CTA / Educational Supervisor. Applications to NES for study leave can be submitted retrospectively, up to two months following an event, but there are potential disadvantages to this approach which are outlined in paragraph 27.

5. Study leave activity should be used to support the aims of the training programme and/or explore career opportunities and improve wider professional development.

6. The following trainees are entitled to 30 days of study leave per annum:

- F2 (foundation year 2 trainee)
- CT (core trainee)
- LAT (locum appointment for training)
- ST (specialty trainee)
- DCT (dental core trainee)
- DStR (dental specialty registrar)

This allowance will incorporate a set number of days for a training programme's delivered educational programme, e.g., regional teaching [see section 17 below].

This allowance will incorporate curriculum-required mandatory training courses.

The remainder will be available to the trainee to use in accordance with this policy and with the approval of their TPD / FPD / CTA.

Less than full time (LTFT) trainees are entitled to study leave on a pro rata basis, in line with other allowances set out in employment terms and conditions.

7. If a mandatory course is not available to a trainee at their base location, they can apply for study leave funding to cover travel, subsistence, and accommodation expenses.
8. F1 doctors are not eligible for study leave, however local opportunities are available to complete tasters / mandatory training [See section 22-23 below].
9. Longitudinal dental foundation trainees (LDFTs) in year two of training (LDFT2) may take up to 5 days study leave from non-practice days, in addition to the generic education programme.

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

10. Eligible: Trainees in approved training programmes (subject to exceptions in section 11 below).
11. Not eligible:
  - F1 doctors (see sections 22-23 below for exceptions)
  - Trainees who defer (or have deferred) entry to training programme
  - Trainees who are 'out of programme' (unless in an OOP training post within Scotland)
  - Defence deanery trainees (medical and dental)
  - GP retainers
  - LAS (Locum Appointment for Service) appointees
  - Trainees who have attained their CCT / CCST and are in their period of grace
  - Dental foundation trainees (also known as dental vocational trainees)

#### **APPROVED USES OF STUDY LEAVE (with and without funding)**

12. Study leave time and/or funding can be applied for to support the activities listed in sections 13-20 below.
13. Attendance at Courses:
  - Courses to assist with the acquisition of technical skills and/or knowledge not easily acquired in the clinical setting, e.g., surgical skills course, acquisition of a theoretical knowledge base such as basic sciences, statistics etc.
  - Courses to assist with the acquisition of an appropriate knowledge base or specialist knowledge associated with clinical training, e.g., ALS or equivalent (and refreshers).
  - Professional development courses, in preparation for the many facets of the trainees' future roles as a consultant/specialist in the NHS.
  - E-learning packages: with appropriate approval from the TPD / FPD / CTA, recognised educational courses and training may be undertaken, e.g., Epilepsy Distance Learning course, e-ALS etc.
  - Exam preparation courses.
14. Attendance at Specialty Association meetings or conferences.
15. Professional and academic examinations: trainees are entitled to apply for study leave time and associated travel, accommodation, and subsistence expenses. Examination fees cannot be funded.
16. Private Study with a specific and defined purpose, e.g., exam preparation (maximum of five working days per exam), write-up of PhD. [See section 24 below in relation to foundation doctors.]
17. Attendance at teaching, i.e., delivered educational programmes where trainee is required to be away from service. Trainee does not need to make a formal application for study leave unless they require to claim expenses. Attendance at teaching can include:

- trainees in a national or multi-site specialty programme travelling to one central location to participate in postgraduate teaching
- foundation trainees attending their educational programme
- specialty trainees attending weekly teaching session held at local base

18. Programme events: for example, a TPD might invite an external speaker to come to a central location to provide teaching/training in support of identified educational priorities. This would benefit a group of trainees (the TPD could “charge” this to the programme, rather than identifying expenditure against individual trainees).

19. Taster sessions (F2): foundation trainees have the opportunity to try out a specialty in advance of making future career choices. An application for study leave time must be made through Turas. Foundation trainees are entitled to two taster sessions (maximum of five days for each) during their two-year programme.

20. Participation in quality workstream events, e.g., member of panel at quality management visit. This applies to trainee associates only.

#### **ACTIVITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR STUDY LEAVE**

21. Study leave time and/or funding will not be approved to support the following activities/resources:

- Unit meetings or other in-hospital meetings not specifically organised for trainees as part of the delivered educational programme, e.g., audit meetings
- Travel to/from training attachments which are outwith the programme region
- Examination fees
- University provided degree courses (undergraduate and postgraduate)
- Subscriptions for educational resources from Royal Colleges/ Faculties.
- Attendance at graduation ceremonies
- Recruitment events / job interviews
- Attendance at ARCP
- Educational materials (reference books, posters for presentation etc)
- Visas
- Wi-Fi costs

#### **EXCEPTIONS**

22. F1 doctors are not eligible for study leave, however, local arrangements exist to enable F1 doctors to undertake:

- Tasters (towards the end of the F1 year, in the last block where possible - maximum five days per taster, two tasters permitted during two-year foundation programme). To fully benefit from tasters, F1 doctors should discuss their career aspirations with their educational supervisor at the middle of the F1 year and plan accordingly for the last block. Application for taster must be made through Turas.
- ALS course.
- PSA (Prescribing Safety Assessment) - travel and subsistence for one sitting.

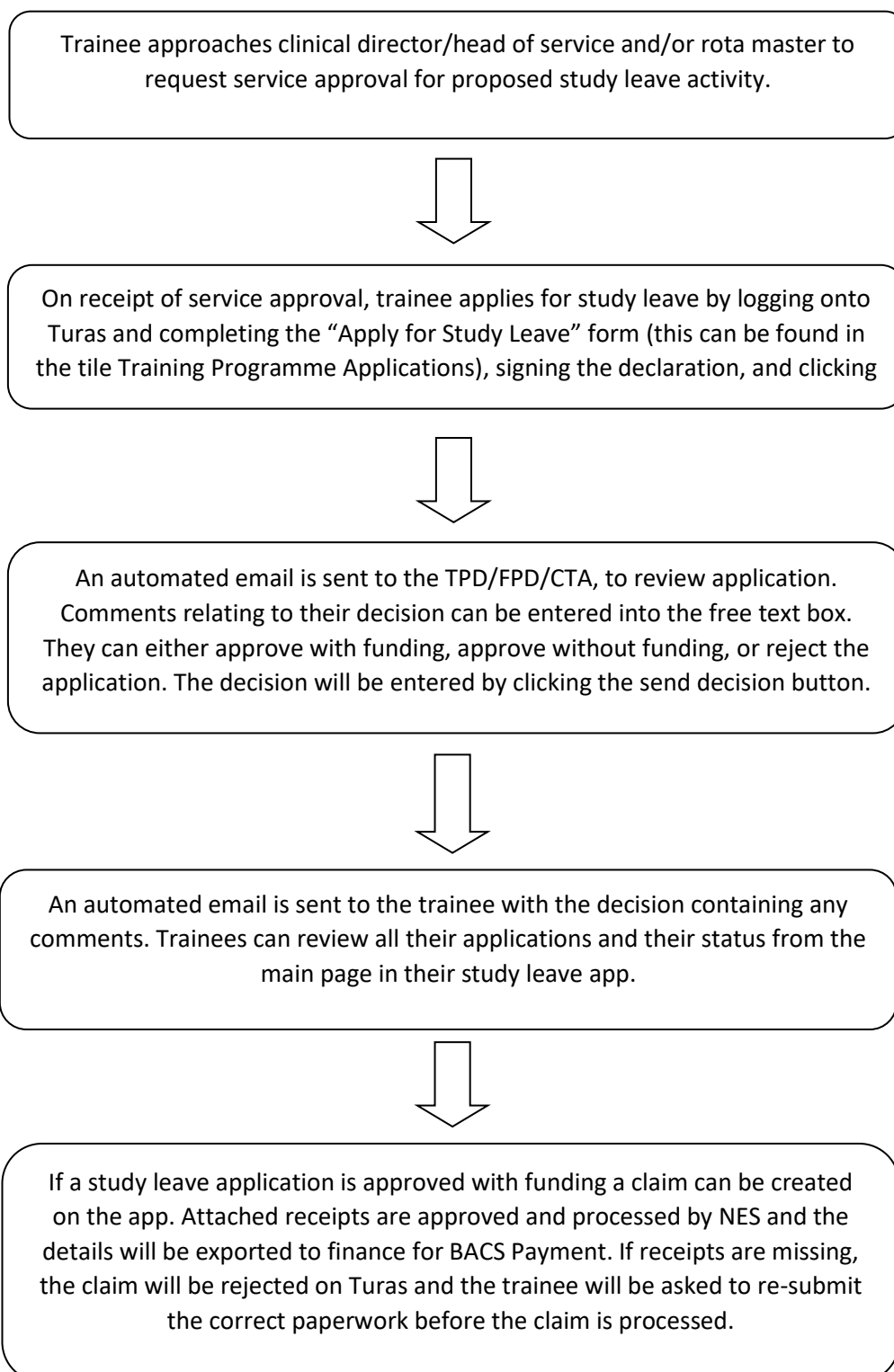
23. FPDs have discretion to approve study leave applications for foundation doctors (F1 and F2) attending other events/educational opportunities, e.g., attending a conference, mandatory course

not available at base location, simulation training, FPD recommendation of other activities to support progression in training.

24. Foundation doctors cannot take study leave to prepare for specialty examinations, but they can (in F2) use study leave to sit the examination.

## **B. OPERATIONAL**

### **MAKING A STUDY LEAVE APPLICATION AND CLAIM**



25. All applications should be made online via [TURAS](#).
26. A trainee can view the status of their online application(s) at any point in the process via their personal page on TURAS.
27. Applications for study leave should ideally be made a minimum of six weeks in advance of the activity to ensure approval of the activity and any related expenses. All trainees are encouraged to make prospective applications wherever possible. Where it has not been possible to enter a prospective application trainees will be allowed to submit a retrospective application up to 2 months following the study leave event. Trainees should be aware that in the case of retrospective applications there is a risk that these will not be approved, or funding related to them will not be approved, and therefore the trainee could have to find other means to cover the time taken and be out-of-pocket for events they have already paid for. For this reason, the Deanery strongly encourages prospective application, and in all cases, trainees must have received prospective approval from the service to be away from their workplace.
28. No retrospective applications will be considered if they are more than two months after the study leave event being applied for. The Turas study leave system will not allow applicants to enter dates more than two months in the past and trainees **must not** enter false dates in the system.
29. When making the application, as much detail as possible regarding the activity should be entered, all mandatory fields must be completed and, where applicable, realistic estimates of all cost elements should be entered to allow full consideration by the TPD / FPD /CTA.
30. In cases where a completed and approved application is submitted without any estimate of costs, it will be assumed that the study leave activity will not incur any expenditure. As such, no claim can be submitted against it subsequently, and the TPD / FPD /CTA's decision will be based on the assumption of no costs being claimed.
31. On making an application via Turas, the trainee will be required to complete a declaration that permissions have been sought from the trainee's Clinical Director / head of service and/or rota master for time out of clinical duties. The application will not proceed unless this named individual is entered as part of the online form. Once the declaration is completed, an automated email will be sent to the selected TPD / FPD /CTA for approval.
- 32. Should the declaration/ manual application be found to be untrue/falsified, this will be treated as a probity issue and the trainee may be reported to the GMC or GDC.**
33. Applications for 'leave only' (without reclaimable expenses) should be submitted via TURAS. Such applications still need appropriate service and TPD / FPD / CTA approval. In such cases, the applicant will not be able to subsequently submit a claim for expenses; but they receive confirmation of the approval (or otherwise).
34. Where an application is not supported by TPD / FPD /CTA, it will be maintained on the trainee's record with the reason for non-approval. Any concerns or outstanding issues about the decision should be referred directly to the TPD / FPD /CTA (see paragraphs 64-67).
35. For the purpose of recording days taken, the study leave year begins from the trainee's date of appointment.
36. There is no carry forward of unused days from one study leave year to the next.
37. NHS Education for Scotland is unable to make direct payments to course/conference organisers. Trainees must pay the costs and claim back the approved expenses.

38. A trainee can withdraw a study leave application at any point in the process, e.g., if course is cancelled or trainee is unable to attend (personal circumstances). The application will be removed and marked as 'withdrawn' in the trainee's personal record on TURAS.

#### **CLAIMING EXPENSES IN RELATION TO A STUDY LEAVE ACTIVITY**

39. Where the trainee has made a study leave application with funding and this has been approved, subsequent claims for expenses will be submitted via Turas. The trainee should fully complete the claim section before submitting, uploading scanned copies of receipts where applicable. The claim can be submitted at any point from the time the study leave application is approved until 3 months after the end date of the study leave activity for prospective applications. Unless there are specific mitigating circumstances, claims received after this deadline will not be processed.

40. Where the trainee has made a retrospective study leave application it is expected that any expenses being claimed will be known and detailed in the application. If the application and funding is approved by the TPD / FPD /CTA, the trainee will submit an expense claim as detailed in point 39. Retrospective applications must be submitted within 2 months of the event they relate to, and the trainee will then have a further 1 month from the approval of the application to submit a claim. Unless there are specific mitigating circumstances, claims received after this deadline will not be processed.

41. Expense claims can be submitted and will be reimbursed once a receipt/ proof of payment has been obtained. The exception to this is claims for mileage which can only be reimbursed after the event has taken place.

42. Certificates of attendance, invoices or fee notes are not accepted as a receipt. The amounts paid/received must be stated on the receipt for it to be valid. Original receipts can be scanned in order to submit electronic copies, however the trainee is required to retain the original receipt for a period of three years for audit purposes.

43. In cases where internet bookings have been made, 'proof of purchase' documentation will be accepted.

44. It is essential that all fields are completed on the claim expenses request to ensure no delay in payment.

45. For applications and claims processed via Turas, approved and receipted expenses will be reimbursed by BACs payment directly to trainee's bank accounts. Bank account details will not be visible to study leave administrators and will be retained only as long as required to issue payment. Payment will usually be received within four weeks.

46. Trainee expenses only will be reimbursed. Costs for family, friends or other trainees will not be reimbursed.

#### **TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION**

[This section represents an agreed policy as developed by the NES Partnership Forum with representation from various organisations.]

47. The cheapest forms of transport and accommodation should be used at all times. Expenses shall be paid to meet actual disbursements and shall not be viewed as a source of remuneration.

48. No first-class travel will be reimbursed unless it can be proved to be cheaper than standard class travel. If not cheaper, the equivalent standard class fare will be reimbursed.

49. Accommodation should be booked which provides best value for money and will be approved at the discretion of the TPD / FPD / CTA (maximum limit for bed & breakfast of £100.00 per night or £150 per night in London). Overnight accommodation will only be provided where the journey involves the trainee leaving home before 6.30am or/ and arriving home after 7.30pm in the evening.

50. All claims for reimbursement must be accompanied by scanned copies of receipts, with the original being retained by the trainee for three years. The following are not classed as receipts: boarding passes, invoices, certificates of attendance, statements of accounts, course flyers, and confirmations of course booking (if no fee is stated).

51. Mileage allowance: public transport rate, currently 27p per mile in line with [DL\(2022\)39](#)

52. Additional passenger (attending same event): 5p per mile per passenger (this must be entered separately, and the name of the passenger clearly stated).

53. Costs for appropriate insurance cover for relevant approved leave will not be reimbursed.

### **SUBSISTENCE**

54. Actual receipted costs can be claimed up to the following maximum limits:

- Absence of 5-10 hours (must include 12.00-14.00): £5.00
- Absence exceeding 10 hours (must end after 19.00): £15.00
- Full 24-hour period: £20.00

55. Course dinners will only be reimbursed up to maximum of £20.00

56. Alcoholic drinks and other non-food items included in receipts will not be reimbursed.

57. Subsistence will not be paid for food items purchased when joining a virtual or online training event from home, place of work, or another venue chosen by the attendee.

### **TPD / FPD / CTA RESPONSIBILITY**

58. Study leave will be managed in relation to training programmes. A Notional Annual Allocation (NAA) is determined by the agreed number of posts in a programme and forms the basis of the budget to be actively managed by the TPD / FPD /CTA. Programme budget is allocated at the beginning of each financial year (commencing 1 April). The purpose of the NAA is to allow programme budgets to be set on an equitable basis.

59. Foundation Programme Directors do not manage a programme-specific budget; however, they assess and approve applications in relation to a nationally allocated Foundation School budget.

60. Authority for any funding comes from the TPD / FPD / CTA and whilst the NAA may be used as a reference point it should not be viewed as a financial restriction on individual trainees.

61. TPD / FPD / CTA has management responsibility for all educational activities undertaken as part of their training programme. As such, they are expected to fully assess each application in light of educational need and relevance as well as budget availability. Their decision is based on all available information and is recorded by the completion of the online application.

62. TPD / FPD / CTAs have the discretion to approve any application but with a maximum financial restriction as stipulated by TPD / FPD / CTA.

63. Programme directors have a responsibility to ensure that in all instances, best 'value for money' is achieved by focusing use of the available funding on core and mandatory curricular requirements.



Where relevant, and where funding is available from their budget, TPDs / FPDs may procure appropriate resources, e.g., visiting lecturers, which would benefit all trainees on the programme. In this case, the NAA does not apply, and PDs can top-slice a proportion of the budget.

64. In order to utilise a proportion of their budget for a resource which would provide benefit to all trainees, TPDs should make a request by emailing the completed pro forma at annex B to [study.leave@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:study.leave@nes.scot.nhs.uk) or [dentalstudyleave@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:dentalstudyleave@nes.scot.nhs.uk). These requests must comply with the approved uses of study leave [sections 13-20]. Where there is doubt about whether the request aligns with these approved uses the request will be considered by the Study Leave Operational Group and a decision reached about whether to proceed or not. Please note that requests for simulation equipment are excluded from this process.

65. The Study Leave Operational Group also offer the opportunity for TPDs/ FPDs to submit requests for funding from any available additional resources within the Medical Directorate of NES. This is to maximise training opportunities and ensure all available resource is directed towards supporting doctors in training. Details on how to submit such a funding request can be found in annex A

### APPEALS PROCEDURE

66. Where a study leave application is rejected by the trainee's Clinical Director / Head of Department on service grounds, the trainee should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their TPD / FPD / CTA.

67. If the study leave application is rejected by the TPD / FPD / CTA on educational or other grounds and the trainee is dissatisfied with this outcome then they should, in the first instance, discuss the reasons directly with the TPD / FPD /CTA in an attempt to resolve the issue.

68. In exceptional circumstances, where the trainee remains dissatisfied with the outcome after discussions with both their clinical director / head of department and their TPD / FPD / CTA; the trainee should formally write, outlining in the communication the original request, reasons for refusal of the request, and discussions with relevant individuals that have already taken place, to:

Dental	Associate Postgraduate Dental Dean - Core & Specialty Training (APDD) <a href="mailto:dentalstudyleave@nes.scot.nhs.uk">dentalstudyleave@nes.scot.nhs.uk</a>
Medicine	<a href="mailto:study.leave@nes.scot.nhs.uk">study.leave@nes.scot.nhs.uk</a> The issue will then be considered by the relevant Postgraduate Dean / Deputy Postgraduate Dean/ delegate

69. The APDD or Postgraduate Dean/ Deputy Postgraduate Dean/ delegate will consider the request for an appeal and if applicable, investigate the full facts of the application before informing the trainee of their final decision. Requests for appeal must be submitted to the study leave or dental study leave mailbox within two weeks of the original request being declined. A response to an appeal request will be issued to the trainee within two weeks of receipt.

### CONTACT US

70. Medical trainees: [study.leave@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:study.leave@nes.scot.nhs.uk)

71. Dental trainees: [dentalstudyleave@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:dentalstudyleave@nes.scot.nhs.uk)

## **Study Leave – request for funding of special requests from Medical Directorate unused resource (if available).**

1. The following process should be followed where FPDs/ TPDs wish to submit a proposal for funding from any unused resource that might be available within the Medical Directorate.
2. The Study Leave Operational Group (SLOG) is introducing an option for trainers to submit requests throughout the training year to be funded from any unused resource that might be available within the Medical Directorate. This is separate to the top-slice option available in the study leave policy and may facilitate larger purchases of equipment or establishment of new training initiatives.
3. Where the FPD/ TPD wishes to submit a proposal for funding from any unused resource that might be available within the Medical Directorate, they must complete the pro forma in Annex B and email it to [study.leave@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:study.leave@nes.scot.nhs.uk)
4. Upon receipt of proposals the study leave team will add the request to a log, acknowledge receipt and advise the FPD/ TPD submitting the pro forma of the next date when such requests will be reviewed.
5. Proposals will be considered by the SLOG. Requests will be circulated to members of the SLOG a minimum of 7 days prior to a meeting to allow due consideration.
6. Ahead of each quarterly SLOG meeting the Finance Business Partner for Training Management will undertake a review of unused resource that might be available within the Medical Directorate to date, and any pending funding approved, and will advise if there is unused resource against the forecast (and what level of funding is available if relevant)
7. At each SLOG meeting all requests will be reviewed with a view to removing any from the log that are deemed unsuitable. Any rejected requests will be noted on the log and the Senior Training Manager will write to the FPD/ TPD outlining the reasons for the rejection and advising of any other relevant avenues through which funding may be sought.
8. Where the Finance Business Partner for Training Management has identified available funding for that quarter, the SLOG will consider all requests against the available funding and reach a decision regarding what to fund (if anything).
9. Proposals should demonstrate the following:
  - Benefit for the maximum number of trainees, ideally on a pan-Scotland basis.
  - Provision of a unique benefit or existing benefit but at a substantially reduced cost.
  - Best value for money.
  - Ideally benefit over multiple training years.
  - Arrangements for ongoing maintenance/ maintenance costs (if applicable).
  - Support from trainees in the training programme to use study leave funding in this manner.
10. The secretariat of the SLOG will record the decisions of the group, taking particular note of any reasons for declined requests or conditions against approved requests. The study leave team will update the log of requests with the SLOG decision following each meeting and make relevant financial arrangements for approved requests.

## Funding/ Top Slice request

Name of requestor		Amount of funding requested	
Please specify if the request is to top slice S/L budget or request unused directorate funding		Title of the initiative	
Names of other collaborators to the request		Curriculum requirements addressed by the initiative	

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

### TRAINEES IN SCOPE OF THE INITIATIVE

e.g., total number of trainees/ grades etc. Please note that applications which benefit the most trainees will be preferred. For regional programmes please specify if there has been collaboration with other regional TPDs to offer the initiative to all trainees in Scotland.

### BENEFITS OF THE INITIATIVE

Preference will be given to applications offering benefit unavailable through existing resources or at a significant cost saving in comparison to existing resources.

Please also specify the timescale for the benefits (i.e., single training year, multiple training years)

## BEST VALUE

e.g., demonstration of quotes from multiple suppliers or evidence that existing provision is at a much higher cost than the proposed initiative

Please also outline any spend to save benefit (i.e., developing the initiative will avoid trainee travel costs to other parts of the UK in future years)

## ONGOING MAINTENANCE

e.g., If the request is for books/ equipment etc. please advise how these will be maintained and how any ongoing costs will be met.

## TRAINEE ENGAGEMENT

Please describe how you have engaged with trainees in regard to the plans outlined above and how they have indicated support for this approach.