

Clause 7

7.0 Medical Education

- 7.1 The union and the employer agree that continuing medical education and vocational training is required to future-proof a competent and well-trained specialist workforce. To this end, the union and employer will aim to foster and support a culture of proactive learning and further education beyond the minimum requirements.
- 7.2 In recognition of the importance of ongoing medical education a minimum number of hour's rostered duty per week will be set aside for the purpose of protected uninterrupted medical education and teaching/learning which is not directly derived from clinical work. This will be a minimum of 2 hours per week for house officers and 4 hours per week for registrars. The parties recognise the expectations of the Colleges and Medical Council in such matters
- 7.3 The parties agree that face-to-face sessions are the preferred manner of delivering teaching. Mandatory or Departmental teaching sessions, including those held by Zoom or equivalent, should be held within ordinary working hours. Where such sessions are regularly held outside of ordinary hours, this time should be included in the salary category calculation or otherwise compensated.
- 7.4 House Officers in their second and subsequent years of service and Registrars who are not on a vocational training programme shall be entitled to five days medical education leave for each full year of service for the purpose of study towards their vocational training prerequisites (including exams), attending interviews for vocational training positions, conferences, courses, or other academic purposes.
- 7.5 House Officers in their second and subsequent years of service and Registrars who are not on a vocational training programme may have an additional one-off entitlement of three weeks (fifteen days) medical education leave. No more than four weeks' medical education leave may be taken in any one year.
- 7.6 Registrars who are on a vocational training programme shall be entitled to 12 weeks' medical education leave over the course of their training and during their employment as an RMO in New Zealand. Not more than six weeks' medical education leave may be taken in any one year. This leave shall be for the purposes of attending courses (including train-the-trainer courses), conferences, studying towards and sitting examinations or the equivalent qualification related papers relevant to the course of study, examinations, or the equivalent in respect to completing their training and obtaining vocational scope of practice. This entitlement shall be available in respect of each vocational training programme a Registrar is accepted into.
- 7.7 Employees undertaking a diploma in Child Health, Obstetrics and Gynaecology or other advanced diplomas shall be entitled to a maximum of two weeks in addition to the provision of clause 7.4 in any year in respect of each diploma, subject to support from the appropriate Clinical Director or applicable clinical lead regarding the timing of the Diploma relative to the RMOs broader medical education.
- 7.8 Applications for Medical Education leave should aim to be submitted as far in advance as possible. Where an employee does not have sufficient entitlement remaining for the period of leave applied for, consideration shall be given to employees using accrued annual leave or unpaid leave may be granted.
- 7.9 Individual applications for Medical Education Leave should be considered and responded to within 14 days. Where a specific request may require a longer timeframe for consideration and decision, this will be communicated to the RMO and any specific issues or concerns flagged by the District. The intent of this clause is to support timely and cost-effective planning and procuring of MEL opportunities.
- 7.10 Leave should be made available for the purposes of courses and examinations that are a mandatory requirement towards gaining entry to or progressing along a vocational training pathway. Leave is to be granted for a time that is appropriate as per the timing of the course/examination in question. For example, for the purposes of undertaking a first attempt at Part 1, specialty, or Fellowship level

examinations, it is reasonable to provide three continuous weeks of study leave leading up to the exam. Extension of leave up to a total of six weeks continuous leave may be considered by the clinical lead of the service. The employer will take all reasonable steps to provide cover to promote access to medical education requirements.

- 7.11 For clarity medical education leave entitlements are specified and operated on a 'whole of RMO career' basis and are portable between District employments. The individual RMO and the District will support the capture and transfer of information on medical education leave usage to support the management of these entitlements.
- 7.12 At the discretion of the employer, additional medical education leave may be allowed, and such leave shall be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 7.13 Nothing in this clause shall preclude the Employer agreeing to provide medical education leave to first year house officers for the purpose of advancing their entry into a vocational pathway.
- 7.14 To support exposure to potential vocational pathway opportunities, an RMO may use their Medical Education Leave to arrange a brief period observing in another service or non-Te Whatu Ora setting. No more than two days medical education leave can be used in any one training year for this purpose. The observation arrangement requires the agreement of both the RMO's current service and the 'host' service / provider. Such arrangements should be included in the RMO's career plan (for example the STONZ career plan document) and/or discussions with their Education Supervisor.

Overview – Application

Health NZ and STONZ agree that continuing medical education and vocational training is required to future-proof a competent and well-trained specialist workforce. The parties will aim to foster and support a culture of proactive learning and further education beyond the minimum requirements.

House Officers that are PGY2 and above and Non-Training Registrars are entitled to the following medical education leave (MEL) for each full year of service;

- 5 days per year
- An additional 2 weeks for the purposes of undertaking a diploma, subject to support from the appropriate Clinical Director or applicable clinical lead in regards to the timing of the Diploma relative to the RMOs broader medical education
- The maximum MEL that can be taken in any one year is 4 weeks

In addition;

- This group is entitled to a one-off 3 week (15 days) entitlement

Requests for MEL for PGY1 House Officers may be considered on a discretionary basis. This will be in instances where it is appropriate e.g. they may have been asked to present at a course or conference, and this has been supported by the appropriate Clinical Director or applicable clinical lead.

Training registrars are entitled to the following MEL over the course of their training and during their employment as an RMO in New Zealand;

- 12 weeks
- This excludes any MEL accessed as a House Officer and Non-Training Registrar
- The maximum MEL that can be taken in in any one year is 6 weeks

There will be a number of hour’s rostered duty set aside for the purpose of unprotected medical learning. This will be a minimum of 2 hours per week for house officers and 4 hours per week for registrars. This time will not be deducted from MEL balances.

MEL applications should be made as far in advance as possible. Districts should make leave available for the purposes of exams and courses that are a mandatory requirement of training.

For travel expenses associated with MEL please refer to clause 10, Employment Related Expenses in the Manual. Approval for MEL does not automatically entitle an RMO to reimbursement of any associated training related costs. This is a separate approval process to the granting of MEL.

MEL entitlements are specified and operated on a whole of RMO career basis, and are transferred between Districts as part of Health NZ employment.

Diagram of STONZ Entitlements



SNEF Project Outcomes – Senior Registrar Leave

Background

During bargaining in November 2020, access to leave and leave cover for Senior Registrars was identified as a priority area requiring further review. It was noted that Senior Registrars are often required to swap their on call /after-hours shifts in order to take leave as it is difficult to provide a reliever due to the level and nature of their work.

A project was established to understand how leave is accessed and covered for RMOs and to develop recommendations to support a consistent and transparent approach enabling access to, and management of leave for this group.

As an outcome from this project a guide for Registrars who take on the roster writing and leave management role was developed. This included updates to the RMO roster and relief review and improvement framework to capture some of the challenges for services without relief roles and to include best practice guidelines and relief models to mitigate some of these challenges.

Purpose of the Roster Writing and Leave Management Guide for Registrars

The guide has been developed to ensure Registrars in the roster writing and leave management role have access to the required resources and that there are appropriate processes in place to support and maximise leave access. The guide may also be useful for induction of new RMO unit staff or other staff who take on the roster writing and leave management role within the service.

The guide and updated RMO roster and relief review and improvement framework were released nationally on 19 July 2022. This included recommendations around next steps for Districts.

Linked Clauses

- The clauses that form part of the Roster Writing and Leave Management Guide for Registrars are;
- Clause 4 Hours of work and Rostering
- Clause 7 Medical Education
- Clause 8 Conference Leave
- Clause 9 Employment relations education leave and union leave
- Clause 16 and Appendix 2 Relief Management
- Clause 17 Limits on hours
- Clause 21 Cover for leave
- Clause 25 Annual leave and Appendix 3 Best Practice Leave Allocation Guidelines
- Clause 26 Sick leave
- Clause 27 Bereavement / Tangihanga leave

The guide is available under the “*Resources for Registrars Writing Rosters and Managing Leave*” section of the National Manual.

Specialty Interviews

The following sets out guidelines on what is deemed reasonable medical education leave (MEL) for an RMO to attend a specialty interview.

When determining the appropriateness of the length of the leave there are a number of factors that need to be considered, noting there may be instances where additional MEL outside of the guidelines is warranted.

Considerations

- Seeking interview times that minimise service disruption wherever possible
- The RMOs rostered duties and providing appropriate preparation time
- The time and length of the specialty interview
- Whether the interview is virtual or requires attendance in person
- Appropriate travel time to the location, or a private meeting space for virtual attendance
- Where the interview panel is based in Australia ensuring time zone differences are accommodated
- Any other individual circumstances requiring special consideration

Where possible, when an interview will fall after a rostered night shift, or on a rostered weekend duty, the RMO is encouraged to seek a mutually agreeable interview time that minimises service disruption. For an afternoon interview, it may be appropriate to either grant a full day of MEL or place the RMO on non-clinical duties for the morning.

Where less than a full day of MEL is granted, the RMO is required to return to work to complete their rostered duty, for the remaining portion of the shift that is not covered by the MEL or apply for annual leave.

Guidelines

Medical Education Leave	Virtual Interview	In person Interview
Half day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview and travel no more than 3 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview and travel no more than 3 hours total
Full day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview and travel of more than 3 hours • RMO rostered to night shift day before interview (i.e. an RMO should not be finishing a night the day of their interview) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview and travel of more than 3 hours total • Interview requiring domestic air travel • RMO rostered to night shift day before interview
More than 1 day		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview requiring international travel • Morning interview requiring domestic travel where rostered duties do not allow the RMO to travel the night before • Interview requiring domestic travel where rostered to night duties

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. If you are not on a vocational training programme what Medical Education Leave (MEL) are you entitled to?
 - House Officers PGY2 and above and Non Training Registrars get 5 days per year of MEL and can also access a one-off 3 week entitlement.
 - In addition to this, for the purposes of undertaking a diploma you are entitled to a further 2 weeks of MEL. This is subject to support from the appropriate Clinical Director or applicable clinical lead in regards to the timing of the Diploma relative to the RMOs broader medical education.
 - The maximum MEL that can be taken in one year is 4 weeks.
 - There is no entitlement to the 12 weeks of MEL under clause 7.6 which is restricted to Registrars on a vocational training programme.
2. Does the MEL I have accessed as a House Officer and Non Training Registrar get deducted from the 12 week entitlement under clause 7.6?
 - No, this is an additional provision. As a Registrar once you are accepted onto a vocational training programme you then have access to the additional 12 weeks of MEL.
 - The maximum MEL in any one year as a Training Registrar is 6 weeks.
3. I am a Non Training Registrar who has taken up my first permanent employment with Health NZ. Can I access MEL in my first year of employment?
 - Yes, you are eligible to access MEL under clauses 7.4, 7.5 and 7.7 in your first year of service.
4. I am a Training Registrar who has taken up my first Health NZ employment as part of an Australasian vocational training programme rotation. Can I access MEL under clause 7.6 in my first year of employment?
 - Yes, you are eligible for MEL under clause 7.6 and can access up to a maximum of 6 weeks in any one year.
5. What happens under the MEL entitlements already provided under the RMOs' previous contractual arrangements?
 - The entitlements under the STONZ CA are expanded; however, leave granted under previous agreements still count to assessing whether the RMO has reached the cap of their respective entitlement under the STONZ CA. See the [Scenarios](#) section for examples of how the whole of service provision applies.
6. Does the 3 week one off MEL entitlement for House Officers and Non Training Registrars have to be taken in one continuous 3 week period?
 - No, the one off 3 weeks of MEL can be taken in separate periods e.g. 1 week in one year and 2 weeks in another year.
7. If I have MEL approved, does this mean I am entitled to reimbursement of the associated costs?
 - No, MEL approval does not mean automatic reimbursement of costs. You will still need to meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Clause 10.
8. If I have exhausted my MEL entitlement and wish to attend a course, is this possible?
 - If you have no MEL entitlement left, consideration shall be given to employees using accrued annual leave or unpaid leave may be granted. Alternatively, additional MEL may be allowed however this is solely at the discretion of the employing District and shall be determined on a case by case basis.
9. If I have approved MEL am I entitled to the abutting weekend as leave?
 - Leave abutting weekends applies to annual leave. It may also apply to medical education leave depending on the specific circumstances and this should be discussed with the RMO Unit.
10. If an RMO is attending a course in Queenstown and wants to extend their stay for a few days holiday, are they able to do this?

- Any leave that is not part of attendance at the course is not medical education leave. Where an RMO wants to extend their leave they would need to apply for this separately as annual leave.
 - Subject to the annual leave being approved by the District, any costs associated with the additional leave e.g. extra nights of accommodation would be the responsibility of the RMO.
11. How do I find out what my available MEL balance is?
- MEL entitlements are operated on a whole of RMO career basis. When an RMO is transferring between Districts the available MEL balance is transferred with other leave entitlements as part of the District payroll process. When an RMO resigns their Health NZ employment any remaining available MEL balance will be detailed on the certificate of service provided to the RMO.
 - Your new District may require this information before any applications for MEL can be assessed. You should liaise with the RMO Support Unit in the first instance if you have any questions regarding your available MEL balance.
12. Can grand rounds be counted as part of protected training time?
- Yes, ground rounds are educational and not directly derived from clinical work.
13. Are all planned teaching sessions required to be face to face learning?
- The preference is that core teaching sessions are held face-to-face and predominantly within ordinary working hours.
 - Mandatory or Departmental teaching sessions, including those held by Zoom or equivalent, should be held within ordinary working hours. Where such sessions are regularly held outside of ordinary hours, this time should be included in the salary category calculation or otherwise compensated.
14. What is the timeframe for responses to requests for MEL once they have been submitted?
- Applications for MEL should be considered and responded to within 14 days. Where a specific request may require a longer timeframe for consideration and decision, this will be communicated to the RMO and any specific issues or concerns flagged by the District.
15. To support exposure to potential vocational pathway opportunities, can I use my MEL to arrange a brief period observing in another service or non-District setting?
- Yes, you can access no more than 2 days of MEL in any one training year i.e. days cannot be banked up for this purpose.
 - Applications under clause 7.14 will be treated as a standard MEL application and leave will be deducted from your existing MEL provision it is not an additional entitlement.
 - The District is not required to arrange such opportunities; it is expected that these are self-identified by the individual and the observation arrangement requires the agreement of the current service and the 'host' service / provider.
 - Such arrangements should be included in your career plan (for example the STONZ career plan document) and/or discussions with your Educational Supervisor.

Scenarios

Medical Education Leave is a whole of service provision. Although entitlements under the STONZ CA are expanded; leave granted under previous agreements still count to assessing whether the RMO has reached the cap of their respective entitlement under the STONZ CA. You will need to;

- Identify MEL accessed previously differentiating between MEL granted for a Diploma and MEL granted to attend courses, conferences and study for exams etc.
- Determine the available entitlement each year based on the type of MEL accessed and whether the amount granted was in excess of the entitlement.
- House Officers and Non Training Registrars;
 - MEL granted previously in excess of the yearly entitlement will be deducted from the 5 days per annum and the one off 3 weeks of MEL.
- Training Registrars;
 - MEL granted previously as a Training Registrar will be deducted from the 12 week entitlement to determine whether there is a residual balance available.

Example 1

- Non Training Registrar, previously employed under NZRDA CA T&Cs for 5 years
- The total MEL taken over the 5 years was 40 days
- Entitlement was 25 days and Registrar has received 15 days in excess of the entitlement
- In this scenario when the Registrar moves to the STONZ CA they have already accessed their 5 days MEL for the current year. Additionally, there is no entitlement to the one off 3 weeks of MEL because this was exhausted in excess entitlements they were granted previously (see below).

MEL Taken	CA entitlement	Excess entitlement to be deducted from one off 3 weeks of MEL
PGY1 year as HO nil	Nil	Nil
PGY2 year as HO took 10 days MEL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 days to attend courses etc. • 5 days for O&G Diploma 	Where completing a Diploma 2 weeks of MEL inclusive of the 5 days p.a. (Total of 10 days)	Nil
PGY3 year stepped up to Non Training Registrar in Surgery. Took 10 days MEL	5 days as not on vocational pathway	5 days
PGY4 year stepped up to Non Training Registrar in Surgery. Took 10 days MEL	5 days as not on vocational pathway	5 days
PGY5 year stepped up to Non Training Registrar in Surgery. Took 10 days MEL	5 days as not on vocational pathway	5 days

Example 2

- Non Training Registrar previously employed under NZRDA CA T&Cs for 5 years
- The total MEL taken over the 5 years was 30 days
- Entitlement was 25 days and Registrar received 5 days in excess of the entitlement
- In this scenario when the Registrar moves to the STONZ CA they have already accessed their 5 days MEL for the current year. Additionally, they have 10 days they can access under the one off 3 weeks of MEL because they had 5 days in excess entitlements granted previously (see below).

MEL Taken	CA entitlement	Excess entitlement to be deducted from one off 3 weeks of MEL
PGY1 year as HO nil	Nil	Nil
PGY2 year as HO took 10 days MEL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 days to attend courses etc. 5 days for O&G Diploma 	Where completing a Diploma 2 weeks of MEL inclusive of the 5 days p.a. (Total of 10 days)	Nil
PGY3 year stepped up to Non Training Registrar in Surgery. Took 5 days MEL	5 days as not on vocational pathway	
PGY4 year stepped up to Non Training Registrar in Surgery. Took 5 days MEL	5 days as not on vocational pathway	
PGY5 year stepped up to Non Training Registrar in Surgery. Took 10 days MEL	5 days as not on vocational pathway	5 days

Example 3

- Training Registrar previously employed under NZRDA CA T&Cs as a Registrar for 5 years
- The total MEL taken was 40 days, 10 days as a Non Training Registrar and 30 days as a Training Registrar (8 weeks total)
- In this scenario when the Training Registrar moves to the STONZ CA, 30 days (6 weeks) will be deducted from the 12 week MEL entitlement. The Registrar will have a remaining MEL balance of 30 days (see below).

MEL Taken	CA entitlement	To be deducted off 12 weeks Training Registrar MEL entitlement
Year 1 – Non Training, took 5 days MEL	5 days as not on vocational pathway	Nil
Year 2 – Non Training, took 5 days MEL	5 days as not on vocational pathway	Nil
Year 3 – Training, took 10 days MEL	12 weeks and no more than 6 weeks in a year	10 days
Year 4 – Training, took 10 days MEL	12 weeks and no more than 6 weeks in a year	10 days
Year 5 – Training, took 10 days MEL	12 weeks and no more than 6 weeks in a year	10 days

Comparison STONZ and NZRDA CAs

The following table sets out where there are differences between the STONZ CA and NZRDA CA. Where there is no difference between clauses no detail has been provided in the comparison table.

	STONZ CA Clause 7	NZRDA CA Clause 26
Medical Education Leave	<p>Clause 7.4 and 7.5</p> <p>House Officers PGY2 and up and Non-Training Registrars get 5 days per year of MEL and can also access a one off 3 week entitlement.</p> <p>The maximum MEL that can be taken in one year is 4 weeks.</p> <p>Clause 7.6</p> <p>Training Registrars an additional 12 weeks of MEL, non-inclusive of MEL accessed at House Officer and Non-Training Registrar.</p> <p>Clause 7.7</p> <p>In addition to the entitlements in clause 7.4, a further 2 weeks MEL for the purposes of undertaking a diploma. This is subject to support from the appropriate Clinical Director or applicable clinical lead in regards to the timing of the Diploma relative to the RMOs broader medical education.</p> <p>Clause 7.8</p> <p>Applications for MEL should be submitted as far in advance as possible.</p> <p>Clause 7.9</p> <p>Individual applications for Medical Education Leave should be considered and responded to within 14 days. Where a specific request may require a longer timeframe for consideration and decision, this will be communicated to the RMO and any specific issues or concerns flagged by the District. The intent of this clause is to support timely and cost-effective planning and procuring of MEL opportunities.</p> <p>Clause 7.14</p> <p>To support exposure to potential vocational pathway opportunities, an RMO may use their Medical Education Leave to arrange a brief period observing in another service or non-District setting. No more than two days medical education leave can be used in any one training year for this purpose. The observation arrangement requires the agreement of both the RMOs current</p>	<p>Clause 26.2</p> <p>House Officers PGY2 and above 5 days per year.</p> <p>Clause 26.4</p> <p>2 Weeks per year if undertaking a diploma (inclusive of the 5 days at clause 26.2).</p> <p>Clause 26.5</p> <p>Total of 12 weeks per vocational training programme which includes MEL accessed as a House Officer and Non Training Registrar.</p> <p><u>Example:</u></p> <p>Accessed 6 weeks as a House Officer / Non Training Registrar remaining balance as a Training Registrar 6 weeks.</p> <p>Clause 26.6</p> <p>Applications for MEL must be submitted at least 3 months in advance.</p>

	service and the 'host' service / provider. Such arrangements should be included in the RMO's career plan (for example the STONZ career plan document) and/or discussions with their Education Supervisor.	
Protected Learning Time	<p>Clause 7.2</p> <p>A minimum of 2 hours per week for house officers and 4 hours per week for registrars.</p>	<p>Clause 26.1 and Schedule 3</p> <p>Protected learning time varies according to District.</p> <p>2 hours for House Surgeons and 4 hours for other RMOs per week for the following Districts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northland, Waitemata, Auckland, Counties Manukau, BoP-Whakatane, Canterbury, South Canterbury, West Coast, Southern <p>3 hours for House Surgeons 4 hours for other RMOs per week for the following Districts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waikato, Taranaki, Hawkes Bay, Mid Central <p>4 hours per week for the following Districts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BoP-Tauranga, Lakes, Whanganui, Wairarapa, Hutt Valley, Capital and Coast, Nelson Marlborough

Forms, Templates and Other Resources

The following resource forms part of clause 7.0 Medical Education. The guide is available on the website where the National Manual is hosted under the "Resources for Registrars Writing Rosters and Managing Leave" section.

Resource	Comment
Roster Writing and Leave Management – Guide for Registrars	<p>This document has been developed to ensure Registrars in the roster writing and leave management role have access to the required resources and that there are appropriate processes in place to support and maximise leave access.</p> <p>While this guide has been developed for Registrars who take on the roster writing and leave management role, content may also be useful for induction of new RMO unit staff or other staff who take on the roster writing and leave management role.</p>