

## 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 DHB. 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 DHB employments. The individual RMO and the DHB 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 DHB 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-DHB 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 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

The DHBs 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

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. DHBs 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.

MEL entitlements are specified and operated on a whole of RMO career basis, and are portable between DHB employments.

## Diagram of STONZ Entitlements



## SNEF Project Outcomes – Senior Registrar Leave

### Background

During STONZ and DHB 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.

## 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 7.5 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 7.5?
  - 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. What happens under the MEL entitlements already provided under the RMOs’ previous contractual arrangements?
  - The entitlements under the STONZ MECA 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 MECA. See the [Scenarios](#) section for examples of how the whole of service provision applies.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 DHB and shall be determined on a case by case basis.
7. 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.
8. 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 DHB, any costs associated with the additional leave e.g. extra nights of accommodation would be the responsibility of the RMO.
9. How do I find out what my available MEL balance is?
- MEL entitlements are operated on a whole of RMO career basis, and are portable between DHB employments. When an RMO is moving between DHBs the available MEL balance is detailed on the certificate of service provided to the RMO by the DHB where they are leaving employment.
  - Your new DHB may require you to provide a copy of 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.
10. Can grand rounds be counted as part of protected training time?
- Yes, ground rounds are educational and not directly derived from clinical work.
11. 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.
12. 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 DHB.
13. To support exposure to potential vocational pathway opportunities, can I use my MEL to arrange a brief period observing in another service or non-DHB setting?
- Yes, you can access no more than 2 days of MEL in any one training year i.e. days can not 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 DHB 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 MECA 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 MECA. 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 RDA MECA 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 MECA 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	MECA 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"> <li>• 5 days to attend courses etc.</li> <li>• 5 days for O&amp;G Diploma</li> </ul>	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 RDA MECA 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 MECA 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	MECA 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"> <li>5 days to attend courses etc.</li> <li>5 days for O&amp;G Diploma</li> </ul>	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 RDA MECA 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 MECA, 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	MECA 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 MECAs

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

	STONZ MECA Clause 7	NZRDA MECA 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 DHB. 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-DHB 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 service and the 'host' service / provider. Such</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>



	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 DHB.</p> <p>2 hours for House Surgeons and 4 hours for other RMOs per week for the following DHBs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northland, Waitemata, Auckland, Counties Manukau, BoP-Whakatane, Canterbury, South Canterbury, West Coast, Southern</li> </ul> <p>3 hours for House Surgeons 4 hours for other RMOs per week for the following DHBs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waikato, Taranaki, Hawkes Bay, Mid Central</li> </ul> <p>4 hours per week for the following DHBs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BoP-Tauranga, Lakes, Whanganui, Wairarapa, Hutt Valley, Capital and Coast, Nelson Marlborough</li> </ul>

## 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>