



Specialist Training Fund for Higher Specialist Trainees, GP Trainees (Years 3 & 4) and Streamlined Trainees Years 3 – 8 (ST 3-8)

**Guidance Document for Trainees,
Training Body Personnel & Employers
July 2025**

Title: Specialist Training Fund

Lead Author: HSE-National Doctors Training & Planning

Effective from: 14th July 2025

HEALTHSERVICEEXECUTIVE

Introduction

To complement the suite of educational and training supports implemented on foot of the introduction of the NCHD Contract 2010, in 2011 the HSE created the Higher Specialist Training fund (HST Fund) for Trainees, i.e. Specialist and Senior Registrars, who are enrolled in approved Higher Training Programmes. The HST Fund was originally introduced by the HSE to address the gap created by the withdrawal of the NCHD Training Grant, in recognition of the higher costs associated with specialist training. Since the introduction of this fund a number of more comprehensive and sustainable supports have been implemented, including:

- A significant increase in the Clinical Course and Exam Refund Scheme¹ (CCERS) from a maximum of €450 for an exam passed to the full cost of the exam;
- The introduction of the Training Support Scheme (TSS)¹ which provides an annual allowance of €2,500 per higher specialist trainee & GP Registrar.

Please note, effective from July 14th 2025 all claims covered under the TSS are not eligible under the HST Fund

Who This Fund Is Available to?

This Specialist Training fund is **only** available to those trainees i.e. SpRs/SRs/ST3-8 who:

- are actively participating in a higher specialist training programme (including recipients of the Dr. Richard Steevens' Scholarship);
- who hold the NCHD Contract(2010);
- GP trainees in their third and fourth years of training.

Amount Available to Each Eligible Trainee

The funding available to each HST/ST3-8 and 3rd/4th year GP trainee is equivalent to €500 per year of training. While each trainee can carry over €500 per year for the number of years that their specialist training period consists of, they cannot claim such funding in advance.

Effective from 14th July 2025:

- A maximum of €150 per year may be claimed for textbooks specifically required as part of their training programme
- A maximum of €250 may be claimed for a GP bag once during a trainee's eligibility for the fund

¹ The current CCERS and TSS policies are available through the following link, <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/fin/refunds.html>

The fund will **not** be available to those higher specialist trainees i.e. who:

- do not hold the NCHD Contract(2010),
- are inactive on a training programme,
- are engaged in overseas training (with the exception of those on the HSE-funded Dr. Richard Steevens' Scholarship),
- are in full time research, or are in a clinical post for which they are not receiving training credit.

Should such individuals become eligible for funding at a certain time, they will not be eligible to claim for funding prior to the date they became eligible.

What is eligible under the HST Fund?

This fund can be used by Senior / Specialist Registrars/ ST 3-8 and 3rd/4th year GP trainees to support the purchase of specialist medical equipment and textbooks specifically required as part of their training programme.

What This Specialist Training Funding Cannot be Used For

This specialist training fund cannot be used to reimburse trainees for claims eligible under the TSS or CCERS schemes. These are schemes the HSE has separate funding arrangements in place for NCHDs.

When can a trainee apply?

Trainees can apply for funding in respect of financial liabilities incurred from the dates Monday, 14th July 2025 to Sunday 12th July 2026. Applications received in relation to expenses incurred prior to 14th July 2025 will not be considered, as the deadline for receipt of claims arising from this period has passed.

How A Trainee Can Access This Fund?

The application for reimbursement is administered by the Postgraduate Training Bodies. Trainees who are eligible to avail of this fund must submit the signed reimbursement form and return it with original receipts with the date of purchase clearly legible to their Training Body. All applications must be signed and approved by the current trainer or training director as set out by the Training Body.

Once the claim is received, the Training Body will review the application. If approved, the Training Body will issue payment directly to the trainee. The decision of the Training Body regarding the eligibility of the application made is final.

Applications for claims in relation to expenses incurred in the 2025/2026 training year must be received by the Training Body no later than **12th October 2026.**

The Training Body will maintain a detailed record of fund payments for each trainee. Training Bodies will submit all details of expenditure under the auspices of this scheme to the HSE (NDTP) on a quarterly basis.

Trainees who have completed their HST/ST/GP training must make their final claim three months following their completion from the programme.

Appendix 1

Frequently asked questions:

1. Can this fund be used for attendance at conferences/courses or other educational events?

No. This fund supports the purchase of specialist medical equipment and textbooks specifically required as part of your training programme only. All courses/conferences that are educationally relevant and support your training are eligible for consideration under the HSE funded Training Supports Scheme (TSS). The scheme is managed directly by employers and sites. Please contact your employer directly or review the policy available at the following link <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/fin/> for further information on this refund scheme.

2. Can this fund be used towards the tuition fees for Masters programme/PhD?

No. This fund supports the purchase of specialist medical equipment and textbooks specifically required as part of your training programme only. Fees for Masters/PhD programmes that are educationally relevant and support your training are eligible for consideration under the HSE funded Training Supports Scheme (TSS). The scheme is managed directly by employers and sites. Please contact your employer directly or review the policy available at the following link <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/fin/> for further information on this refund scheme.

3. Can I claim towards the purchase of textbooks?

Yes. Original receipts with the date of purchase clearly legible must be submitted to the Training Body in order to be considered eligible. Please note there is a financial cap of €150 per year on the reimbursement of textbooks through this fund.

4. Can this fund be used for exams fees towards professional exams i.e. membership/fellowship exams?

No, there is a separate Clinical Courses and Examination Refund Scheme (CCERS) for NCHDs operated by the HSE which refunds the fees of specific HSE approved clinical by employers and sites. Please contact your employer directly or review the policy available at the following link <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/fin/> for further information on this refund scheme.

5. Can this fund be used towards travel expenses in relation to exams, courses or conferences?

No. Travel expenses in relation to exams, courses, or courses deemed educationally relevant and support your training are eligible for consideration under the HSE funded Training Supports Scheme (TSS). The scheme is managed directly by employers and sites. Please contact your employer directly or review the policy available at the following link <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/fin/> for further information on this refund scheme. These claims are considered in line with HSE Guidelines regarding travel and subsistence and if approved, will be reimbursed at public sector rates.

6. If I don't claim the full €500 in the year do I lose the remainder of the funding?

No, the specialist training fund is designed as a rolling fund. For each year of training that you are eligible to claim the specialist training fund you can avail up to €500 towards equipment and textbooks. However, if you do not claim the full €500 the remainder will "roll over" to the next year of training making your available amount to claim €500 plus the amount "rolled over" from the previous year.

Trainees who have completed their training must make their final claim within three months following completion of their programme. Retrospective claims passed this date will not be considered and remaining funds will be returned to the HSE.

7. Can I claim if I am on statutory maternity leave?

Yes, if you currently hold or are receiving the T's and C's of the NCHD Contract (2010).

8. I am doing research this year, am I eligible for the €500 specialist training fund?

No, this fund is only available to those higher specialist trainees i.e. specialist registrars and senior registrars who:

- are actively participating in a higher specialist training programme (including recipients of the Dr. Richard Steevens' Scholarship);
- who hold the NCHD Contract(2010);
- GP trainees in their third and fourth years of training.

9. I am in a clinical post for which I am not receiving training credit – am I eligible for the Specialist Training Fund?

No, you must be actively enrolled in a Higher Specialist Training programme, receiving clinical credit and hold an NCHD Contract 2010 to be eligible.

10. If I finish training in January can I claim the full €500?

No, if you complete training in January you can claim €250. All claims must be made within 3 months of your completion date.

11. How long will it take for the reimbursement to be sent to me?

Once your claim has been reviewed and processed by the Postgraduate Training Body payment should be made within 8 weeks.

