

## Continuing Medical Education (CME)

The following questions about continuing medical education (CME) have been identified by the ASMS industrial team.

More information is available in the Standpoint on Professional Development, available on our website, [www.asms.org.nz](http://www.asms.org.nz).

Please call the industrial team on 04 499 1271 if you have further questions, or email us at [asms@asms.org.nz](mailto:asms@asms.org.nz).

**1 Are all SMOs entitled to CME leave and expenses under the MECA?**

No. You are not entitled to CME leave and expenses if you are employed as a locum or on a fixed term contract for 6 months or less.

**2 Are all SMOs entitled to 10 days CME leave each year?**

No. Only full time employees (i.e. those with an agreed weekly job size of 40 hours or more) are entitled to the full 10 working days. Employees who work less than 40 hours are pro-rated accordingly.

**3 Are all SMOs entitled to receive \$16,000 expenses each year?**

No. Only full time employees and part time employees, who have no other income from medical practice, are entitled to the full \$16,000. Part time employees with income from some other medical or dental practice will be pro-rated accordingly.

**4 Are any SMOs entitled to receive more than \$16,000 expenses annually?**

Yes, but under quite limited circumstances. The MECA prescribes minimum entitlements which may be increased by negotiation between individual employees and their employer. Also, under the MECA there are three DHBs that do not prescribe a dollar amount or limit on CME expenses for their SMO employees. Currently these are Whanganui, Wairarapa and West Coast DHBs. We do not know how many (if any) SMOs actually claim and receive more than \$16,000 in a single year, but some may if the CME has been approved. Finally, the MECA allows SMOs who are enrolled in two or more MOPS programmes to receive up to an additional \$500 p.a.

**5 What if I work for more than one DHB?**

Your annual entitlement will be shared across the DHBs in accordance with the formula in clause 36.3(b) & (c).

**6 May I use my CME funds for premium economy or business class travel?**

Most DHBs now have policies that allow this. In some cases the local policies have other requirements. Check your local policy or contact the ASMS. In all cases there must be sufficient funds and the expenditure cannot compromise your ability to satisfy your CME obligations or College or Medical Council recertification.

**7 May I use my CME funds to purchase a laptop or other electronic aids?**

Yes. This is covered in MECA clause 36.1(c). Most DHBs now have policies (or agreements with ASMS) that allow such expenditure. However you may need to show that the main purpose of the purchase is to support your CME. If you require a laptop for your work it should be purchased and paid for by your employer as a "tool of trade".

**8 Will the purchase of electronic aids incur extra tax?**

Yes, in most cases. This is because you will own the item and IRD deem the purchase price as part of your salary, thereby attracting tax, which will usually be paid from your CME funds.

**9 May I use CME expenses to purchase books and journals?**

Yes provided the purchases are accepted as being related to your CME or professional development by your DHB.

**10 May I use my CME funds to pay subscriptions for electronic journals or other publications?**

Yes, if it is for your personal CME activities. DHB-wide subscriptions are considered as tools of trade.

**11 If I do CME on a weekend day or on a public holiday am I entitled to day(s) in lieu?**

Yes.

**12 May I accumulate any unused CME leave or expenses?**

Yes, both your CME leave and expenses may be accumulated for 3 years and, by agreement, up to 5 years.

**13 Can I gift my CME to someone else?**

No.

**14 Do I have to book my travel for CME through the DHB-assigned travel agent?**

No, although many DHBs prefer you to do so. The choice remains yours.

**15 Am I entitled to take my CME leave and expense balances with me when I leave the DHB?**

No.