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Learner Support Fund – Guidelines for Allocation of Funds

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Approved by Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Learner Support Funds

GUIDELINES FOR ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

In all cases, an attendance rate of **at least 90%** is expected from learners who receive funding.

A College Support Fund (CSF) (for non-accredited courses - course fees only)

Applications are limited to a maximum of **two courses** in one academic year, normally with a maximum total amount of **£100** per student. A contribution of at least 30% will be expected from the student. The Fund is limited, and once used up further applications cannot be considered. Priority will be given to applicants who can demonstrate that attendance on the course will improve their wellbeing; for therapeutic reasons; or that attendance will contribute towards their rehabilitation.

B Advanced Bursary Loan Fund (ALBF) (for accredited course) for learners enrolled at Level 3 or above aged 19+ who have taken out a Bursary loan. The Fund can help with the cost of childcare or additional expenses related to the course. Maximum total normally £500 per student.

C Learner Support Fund (LSF) (for accredited courses - age 19+)

Applications are limited to a maximum **£500** per academic year towards tuition fees, exam fees, childcare, books, materials, and (in exceptional circumstances) travel. A contribution of a minimum of 30% will be expected from the learner. The Fund is limited, and once exhausted it will not be possible to consider further applications.

Written evidence of entitlement to state benefit or low income dated within the last three months will be required at the time of application, in the form of payslips or proof of a means tested benefit.

Priority is given to the following learners:

- 1 those not in receipt of a means-tested benefit who can provide evidence of a low household income (less than £30,000 or below) and who may not be eligible for concessionary fees
- 2 those in receipt of a means-tested benefit but not eligible for fee remission

The Fund is available for:

- 1 **Tuition fees** - paid directly on the learner's behalf.
- 2 **Exam fees** - paid directly on learner's behalf.
- 3 **Childcare** - available while learners are attending a Sutton College course during term time. Payment will be made directly to an OFSTED registered childcare provider. The maximum amount available may be exceeded at the Panel's discretion.
- 4 **Materials, books, equipment** - reimbursed when receipts are provided.

Learners may be able to apply for help with materials approved as essential and approved for completion of their qualification; books and equipment related to their course. Payment will only be made on production of receipts. Stationery items (e.g. pens, binders, printing) are excluded. The College shall have the right to request the return of certain materials and equipment at the end of the course. The College reserves the right to keep a learner's work for display and marketing purposes where the learner has not been charged course expense fees for the materials e.g. fees met by Learner Support Funding.

- 5 Travel** – assistance may be considered in exceptional circumstances towards the cost of travel by public transport provided a learner cannot study for the same course nearer to their home. Payment will be made on production of receipts.

Additional Information:

Preference will be given to applications which may lead to qualifications or employment opportunities. Learners need to show that they intend to use the course to progress into (or access) a qualification for obtaining employment.

Progression:

Students wishing to continue the same subject from one year to the next must show progression; funding will not normally be awarded to repeat the same level in the same subject or for exam retakes.

Attendance and exams:

Students must show commitment to the course with an attendance rate of at least 90%. If a student withdraws from the course before completion, or if attendance drops below an acceptable rate without a genuine explanation, they will be required to repay the funding granted to them. If a student has unavoidable reasons for withdrawing from a course, they must contact the Learner Support Fund Administrator to explain, and provide reasons and proof in writing.

When funding is granted, students must take the appropriate exam or accreditation. If a recipient of LSF fails to sit the relevant exam they will not be eligible for further funding.

Previous withdrawals/low attendance:

Students will not be eligible to re-apply if they have previously received funding and withdrawn from a course or if their attendance dropped much below 90%, unless they can demonstrate valid reasons.

Applications denied:

If an application is denied, applicants may re-submit no sooner than the following term. For those denied funding, students may pay the balance of their fees. Otherwise the following will apply in respect of a refund of the amount already paid by the student:

- If the class has not started, the student is entitled to a full refund
- If the class has started and they have attended, a calculation will be made according to the number of sessions attended. A refund of the balance will then be made.

If an applicant applies for courses from both the LSF and the College Support Fund, the limit on the maximum of two courses applies.

It is the learner's responsibility to advise the Department of Work & Pensions about any learner support received, as this may affect eligibility for some benefits.