

Learner Support Fund Panel – Terms of Reference

Strategy/Policy Responsibility: Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	
Date approved	
Review date	April 2023
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REF NO. QTL-MSS-017

Approved by Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Sutton College

LEARNER SUPPORT FUND PANEL

Terms of Reference

1 FUNCTIONS

The LSF Panel and LSF Administrator exists to:

- a) Agree disbursement of the Learner Support Fund, within the terms and conditions set by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or Greater London Authority (GLA).
- b) Devise and implement procedures for the disbursement of the College Support Fund within the criteria agreed by the College Governing Body.
- c) Agree disbursements of the Advanced Bursary Loan Fund to those learners who have taken out a Bursary loan, within the conditions set by the Skills Funding Agency.

2 MEMBERSHIP

- Head of Finance
- Director of Learner Services
- Learner Services Leader

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Within the ESFA and GLA's terms and conditions for the payment of Learner Support Funds and the College's criteria for the payment of College Support Funds:

- 3.1 To approve procedures for the allocation of Learner Support Funds
- 3.2 To approve procedures for the allocation of College Support Funds (course fee only)
- 3.3 To approve procedures for the allocation of the Advanced Bursary Loan Fund
- 3.4 To determine criteria to prioritise needs regarding disbursement of these funds in line with priority groups as outlined by the ESFA and GLA.
- 3.5 To set maximum payments per application, but the Panel should have discretion to increase this in exceptional circumstances. The Fund is a contribution towards costs, and will not necessarily meet the total cost of funding.
- 3.6 To ensure that payment for childcare is made directly to an OFSTED registered Childminder or nursery only. To ensure payments for materials are paid on production of valid receipts.
- 3.7 To authorise payments to be made to learners applying for grants from the Learner Support, College Support Fund and ABLF on consideration of individual applications.
- 3.8 **Learner Support Fund** - learners (19+) will normally be limited to a **maximum of £500** per academic towards tuition fees, exam fees, childcare*, books, materials and travel in exceptional circumstances. *with discretion to exceed £500 for childcare.
- 3.9 **College Support Fund** learners will normally be limited to a **maximum of two non-accredited courses** (for course fees only) in one academic year, to a **maximum of £100** per learner.

- 3.10 **Advanced Bursary Loans Fund** will normally be limited to **£500** for learners aged over 19 years who have taken out a loan for their fees, for assistance towards books, professional membership, *childcare or travel (in exceptional circumstances). *with discretion to exceed £500 for childcare. Learners must demonstrate financial hardship in the same way as the other funds.
- 3.11 Learners are expected to make a minimum financial contribution of 30% of the total cost. They must show progression and will not normally be funded for the same course in consecutive years.
- 3.12 LSF will be considered for those in receipt of a means tested benefit, low income in line with ESFA or GLA thresholds, or a combined household income before £30,000 gross per annum.
- 3.13 The Panel shall decide on refusal or require reimbursement when a learner who received funding withdraws or has poor attendance.
- 3.14 The Panel will consider any appeals against refusal of funding. In the event of an application being denied, applicants may re-submit an application no sooner than the following term, and will only be reconsidered if there is evidence that circumstances have changed.
- 3.15 The LSF Panel may delegate the decision on straightforward applications to one member if these fulfil the criteria for eligibility. More complex applications must be agreed by two members. Any unusual requests shall be confirmed by the full Panel.
- 3.16 The maximum payment for all categories to be reviewed annually, along with an annual review of Terms of Reference in conjunction with ESFA or GLA guidelines.
- 3.17 Attendance of **at least 90%** is expected from learners receiving funding.

4 MEETINGS AND RECORDS

- 4.1 Meetings shall be held as required and include at least three members or alternate suitable members as necessary. Meetings can be conducted by conference call, or decisions made via e-mail correspondence.
- 4.2 Appropriate information for effective decision-making on awards will be circulated to the Panel by the Administrator in advance of decision-making.
- 4.3 Records of decisions on awards shall be monitored and maintained by the Administrator, involving: recording of amounts granted to each learner on UNIT-e, recording monthly spending on google spreadsheet, storage of applications.
- 4.4 An annual return of expenditure by category is submitted to the ESFA or GLA each year as is required