



Learner Support Fund Panel – Terms of Reference

REF NO. QTL-MSS-017

Approved by Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Strategy/Policy Responsibility: MIS

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Sutton College

LEARNER SUPPORT FUND PANEL

Terms of Reference

1. Functions

The Learner Support Fund (LSF) Panel and Administrator exist to:

- a) Agree the disbursement of the Learner Support Fund in accordance with the terms and conditions set by the Department for Education (DfE) or Greater London Authority (GLA).
- b) Devise and implement procedures for the disbursement of the College Support Fund, within criteria agreed by the College Governing Body.
- c) Agree the disbursement of the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund, for learners who have taken out an Advanced Learner Loan, in line with DfE conditions.

2. Membership

- Director of Learner Services
- Head of Enrolment & Customer Service
- Vice Principal

3. Terms of Reference

Operating within the DfE and GLA terms and conditions and the College's internal funding criteria, the Panel will:

- 3.1 Approve procedures for the allocation of Learner Support Funds.
- 3.2 Approve procedures for the allocation of College Support Funds (course fees only).
- 3.3 Approve procedures for the allocation of the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund.
- 3.4 Determine and review criteria to prioritise funding based on national and local guidance and identified learner needs.
- 3.5 Set maximum funding per application, with discretion to increase in exceptional circumstances. The funds contribute towards costs and may not cover them in full.
- 3.6 Ensure that childcare payments are made directly to OFSTED-registered providers only. Reimbursements will only be considered if the provider is OFSTED-registered. Payments for materials will be made only upon production of valid receipts.
- 3.7 Authorise payments to eligible learners following assessment of individual applications.
- 3.8 Apply a maximum funding cap of £500 per academic year per learner for the Learner Support Fund, covering tuition fees, exam fees, childcare*, books, materials, and, in exceptional circumstances, travel. (*Discretion to exceed £500 for childcare.)
- 3.9 Apply a maximum of £100 per academic year for College Support Fund applicants, limited to two non-accredited courses.

- 3.10 Apply a maximum of £500 per academic year for Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund applicants aged 19+, covering books, professional membership, childcare*, or travel in exceptional circumstances. (*Discretion to exceed £500 for childcare.) Learners must demonstrate financial hardship.
- 3.11 Where learners are not eligible for full funding, a minimum contribution of 30% towards tuition fees is required. Funding will not normally be awarded to repeat the same course in consecutive years; evidence of progression is required.
- 3.12 Applications will be considered from learners in receipt of a means-tested benefit or with a gross household income of £30,000 or less, or in line with DfE or GLA thresholds.
- 3.13 Decide on recovery of funds or refusal in cases where learners withdraw or have poor attendance.
- 3.14 Consider appeals following funding refusal. Applications may be resubmitted no earlier than the following term, and only if circumstances have changed.
- 3.15 Delegate straightforward applications to one panel member. More complex cases must be agreed by at least two members. Unusual or exceptional applications must be considered by the full Panel.
- 3.16 Review maximum payments and this Terms of Reference annually, in line with funding body guidelines.
- 3.17 Learners receiving funding are expected to maintain 100% attendance. Persistent non-attendance may result in funding being withdrawn and affect eligibility for future support.

4. Meetings and Records

- 4.1 Meetings will be held as required and must include at least three core or alternate members. Decisions may be made via meeting, conference call or email correspondence.
- 4.2 The LSF Administrator will circulate all relevant information in advance to enable informed decisions.
- 4.3 The LSF Administrator will maintain accurate records of funding decisions, including:
- Allocation records in UNIT-e
 - Monthly spend tracking via Google Sheets
 - Secure storage of applications
- 4.4 An annual return of funding expenditure (by category) will be submitted to the DfE or GLA, as required.