



# Learner Support Fund Panel – Terms of Reference

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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 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 GLA conditions.

#### 2. Membership

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

#### 3. Terms of Reference

Operating within the 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 Reimbursements for child care 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 travel, where considered reasonable and if the course is not offered closer to the applicants home. (\*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 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 The College aims to assess all fully completed Learner Support Fund applications and communicate the outcome to the learner within 10 working days of receipt.

4.5 An annual return of funding expenditure (by category) will be submitted to the GLA, as required.