

# 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) & Loans Bursary Policy and Procedure for 2020/21 Academic Year

The DLSF and Loans Bursary Funds are available to support learners who are undergoing financial hardship, which may prevent them from accessing and participating in learning.

To access these support funds, you must meet the personal eligibility rules set out in the Education Skills Funding Agency's guidance.

Funding is limited and any awards are made at the discretion of Thurrock Adult Community College. Once the annual allowance for support funds have been fully allocated, no further awards can be made in the remainder of the academic year. The College reserves the right to amend or change offers of support to best meet the needs of the learners applying to this fund.

Continuing pressures on the College's budget and finances impact on our ability to offer support to individuals. Therefore, in 2020/21, we have amended our criteria and award amounts to ensure we can offer help to as many learners as possible who are aiming towards finding sustained employment.

**You can apply to either fund only if you have lived in the UK/EU for at least 3 years and your household income is:**

**£22,750.40 or under – households with one adult (those aged 19+)**

**£29,250.50 or under – households with more than one adult (those aged 19+)**

Your degree of financial hardship will be established as part of the application process. You will be required to provide evidence showing your personal and household income, inclusive of benefits.

Eligibility to claim from either fund does not automatically entitle you to an award and any award made is subject to satisfactory attendance, behaviour and achievement. Overall attendance can be no less than 90%, with full attendance required for every assessment and exams session. If you do not complete your qualification, you will be expected to pay back any funds awarded to you.

It is your responsibility to tell the Department for Work and Pensions about any learner support you are receiving from us, as learner support payments may affect eligibility to state benefits.

**Eligibility** means those learners who are enrolled on an Adult Skills funded course (level 2 or below) and meet any one of the criteria as listed below, plus the mandatory item f:

- a) Those in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or an income based benefit, or on a low income
- b) The unwaged dependant of a person in receipt of JSA, ESA or an income based benefit and is seeking employment

- c) Those taking a Skills for Life programme of study (eg. English, Maths and Digital Skills legal entitlement courses)
- d) Adults undertaking a first full level 2
- e) Those aged 19-23 and undertaking a first full level 3
- f) If you have received financial support in previous years, you must have completed the course of study with the required level of attendance and been successful in the qualification aim

**There is no automatic entitlement. Applications are based on your total annual gross household income.**

### **Courses up to Level 2: Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF)**

Before making an award the learner's specific financial hardship need must be identified within the following areas: (DLSF guidance: Education Skills Funding Agency):

- ✓ 19 or over and in financial hardship
- ✓ 20 or over with childcare issues

You must be attending an Adult Education Budget (AEB) funded course up to Level 2.

### **Courses Level 3 and above: Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund**

You must be in receipt of an Advanced Learning Loan to access this funding.

Before making an award the learner's specific financial hardship need must be identified within the following areas: (DLSF guidance: Education Skills Funding Agency):

- ✓ 19 or over and in financial hardship
- ✓ 20 or over with childcare issues

If you are under 20 and require support with Childcare fees, for any course, you can find information on Care to Learn on the gov.uk website (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-to-learn-guide-for-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>).

## **What can I get funding for?**

### **Course and exam fees (AEB funded courses only)**

The Discretionary Learner Support Fund may pay up to a 100% contribution towards your course and exam fees. Fees will be paid directly to the office where the learning takes place. You will be expected to pay any outstanding amount yourself. Contributions will be based on your total household annual gross income (see table below)

## **Childcare (AEB and Adult Learner Loan funded courses)**

This is for learners aged 20 and over where childcare is a barrier to learning and who are not already accessing “Care to Learn” funding. The Discretionary Learner Support Fund or Loans Bursary may help towards childcare costs for the following:

- ✓ The days when you are timetabled to attend the course or examination
- ✓ Attending placements which are compulsory to the successful completion of the course

Our preferred Childcare provider is the Community College Preschool located on site and this is where funding will be allocated too in the first instance, should your child meet their criteria and your course is during opening times. Funding for other childcare providers will only be considered in exceptional circumstances or where the following applies:

- The Community College Preschool on site is full at the day/time of your lesson
- Your child does not meet the criteria for a place at the Community College Pre-school
- Your lesson/course is outside of the on site Community College Pre-school opening times (eg. in the evening)

If this is the case, **the childcare provider must be Ofsted registered**. A registered childcare provider can be a; Childminder, Crèche or Nursery.

The amounts awarded will depend on household income and arrangements of student and provider, up to a maximum of £17 per session, per child (any additional/remaining balance will need to be paid for by the learner). Payment is made directly to the childcare provider and will cover only the period the learner is studying in College plus an allowance for travelling time.

## **Educational Visits and Placements - Travel (AEB and Adult Learner Loan funded courses)**

Either Fund may pay a contribution towards the cost of travel for educational visits and placements essential to the course. You cannot claim for travel if you live within 1 mile of the educational visit venue or placement for your course. If you do not drive you must use public transport where available. You will be required to supply evidence such as bus/train tickets. You will not be reimbursed for taxis unless in exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the College). Mileage is reimbursed at 14.3p/mile.

## **Books & Equipment - essential (AEB and Adult Learner Loan funded courses)**

One or two books might be ‘core texts’ which are essential for the completion of the course of study. The cost of materials/books is supplied by the Course Leader/Tutor and any award made will be based on this information. Equipment must be essential to your study, for example: specific clothing required for the course, tools for the trade, devices to aid online access to learning materials etc. This can only be provided where if you were not to have this equipment it would be a barrier to learning. This is at the discretion of the College.

**All equipment remains the property of the College and must be returned to Learner Services/Reception on completion of your course. Failure to do so will result in the cost of any books/materials becoming payable.**

## External Registration Fees (AEB and Adult Learner Loan funded courses)

You can apply for support with DBS check fees, Professional Body Membership fees and any other relevant external fees related to the course if it is an essential requirement of undertaking the qualification. You cannot apply if this is already included in the course fee or where your employer is required to cover these costs (eg. if you are undertaking the course at the request of your employer or as part of your employment requirements). This is at the discretion of the College.

## Other, eg. Travel (AEB and Adult Learner Loan funded courses)

In exceptional cases either fund may pay a contribution towards travel to the venue of your course, on lesson days, where this could be a barrier to attending. All travel must be booked and paid for by the College. This only applies to those using public transport such as buses, trains and taxis. Either fund will not contribute towards private transport or car mileage. This is at the discretion of the College.

## Contribution rates

Contribution rates are based on individual circumstances and total annual gross household income. The table below defines the contribution percentage for the fund & individual within the rules stated above.

Childcare has a maximum award of £17 per session, per child

Household Income Bands - Percentage of Fees to be funded by the DLSF			
Band	Household	% fund contribution	% learner contribution*
1	<u>Individuals in receipt of JSA, ESA or Universal credit</u> (earning under £343 per month (single household) or £549 per month (joint household) take-home pay <sup>#</sup> not including benefits)	100%	0%**
2	<u>In receipt of benefits:</u> earning over ESFA threshold but available for work and taking course to gain employment or improve work prospects	75%	25%
3	<u>In receipt of benefits:</u> but not available for work and/or not taking course to gain employment or improve work prospects	50%	50%
4	<u>Single:</u> total income under £17,004 per annum <u>Joint:</u> total income under £22,750.40 per annum	50%	50%
5	<u>Single:</u> Between £17,004 to £22,750.40 per annum <u>Joint:</u> Between £22,750.41 to £29,250.50 per annum	25%	75%

\* this will be your contribution to the cost of the element you are applying to the fund for support.

\*\* for essential equipment and resources only. For support with Childcare or travel you will need to submit an application and funding will be based on your annual household income.

<sup>#</sup>An unemployed learner may also receive an income alongside their benefit claim. In order to be fully funded under the unemployed definition "take home pay" (stated on the Universal Credit statement) is less than £343 a month (sole adult in their benefit claim) or less than £549 a month (joint benefit claim with partner).

## How do I apply?

In order for us to establish financial hardship and your eligibility to apply to either fund, you must complete the relevant application form and submit with proof of your household income including any benefits.

### We will expect to see the following documents:

- ✓ A copy of at least 3 months' pay slips for all working adults in the household
- ✓ Proof of any benefits awarded to any adult in the household
- ✓ A copy of your most recent bank statement

**Please note, without acceptable evidence your application cannot be processed.**

## Appeals

A learner who is not happy with a decision relating to their application may appeal, in writing to the Principal. Email PA to the Principal: [p.denmark@tacc.ac.uk](mailto:p.denmark@tacc.ac.uk).

## How we will use your information

We will use your information to provide the service requested. We may share your personal data between our services and with partner organisations, such as government bodies and authorities. We will do so when it is of benefit to you, or required by law, or to prevent or detect fraud. To find out more, go to privacy page on [www.tacc.ac.uk](http://www.tacc.ac.uk).