



**KING  
GEORGE V  
COLLEGE**

# 19 + Discretionary Learner Support Fund Policy and Procedures 2019/20

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## 1. Policy Statement

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The College is committed to distributing the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in a fair and consistent way. Funding is to be provided to increase access, retention and achievement. It can be used to help students overcome financial barriers to learning and promote wider access to ensure that people from all backgrounds can take part in learning.

## 2. Discretionary Learner Support Fund (dLSF)

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The dLSF is separated into 2 areas:

- 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Funds
- 20+ Childcare Funding

The main purpose of the 19+ dLSF is to support learners with a specific financial need that could prevent them participating in learning. Funds should only be allocated to learners where a means assessment has identified a need for that individual.

Students who are aged 19+ and in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan are not eligible for this fund; they must make an application to the Advanced Learner Loan Fund.

### **3. Application Process and Documentary Evidence**

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#### **3.1 dLSF 19+**

Students are required to complete an application form and provide documentary evidence of income or identification of being in a priority group i.e. such as fee remission categories. This evidence could be in the form of letters, bank statements, Universal Credit, Tax Credit Award Notices, Tenancy Agreements, Council Tax bills etc (this list is not exhaustive). Students will also need to provide evidence to support their request e.g. College order form for kit/equipment/uniform, signed book list from tutors, compulsory trips, receipts for individual items etc.

Applications will be available for completion throughout the summer and during September by telephoning the College, accessing the website or calling into College. Students are required to send their forms in with the relevant evidence for assessment by the Advice & Guidance Officer. Any forms received with incomplete evidence will have a two week period to resend any relevant documents on receipt of the returned application form. Students may if needed telephone the Student Information Team and make an appointment for support and guidance with completion of the form and application process. Funds are limited. Applications received outside of the period set out below will be considered on a needs basis and the amount of funds remaining.

#### **3.2 Childcare Funds 20+**

Students can register their interest in applying for funding once they have made an application to study to the College. Funds are allocated on a strict first come first served basis. Students are asked to provide the same financial information as for dLSF19+ but also have to provide information that the provider is Ofsted-registered (Early Years Register for children aged 0-5, Compulsory Childcare Register for 5-8 and Voluntary Childcare Register for over 8's).

#### **3.3 Travel**

Full time students who are aged 19+ and live more than 1 miles away from College can apply for a travel pass by completing the relevant application forms. For more information please see Travel Passes and Funds Policy and Procedures.

Students who do not wish to apply for a travel pass can apply for help towards travel costs e.g. petrol, 15p per mile per timetabled day. This cost will be capped at the cost of the cheapest ticket / pass available on public transport. Applications follow the normal Discretionary Learner Support Fund process.

## 4. Eligibility – dLSF 19+ and Childcare 20+

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### 4.1 Eligibility criteria

Funding will focus on those individuals who are financially disadvantaged and who are in need of support in areas such as childcare, transport, books and equipment.

Eligibility is assessed in a number of possible ways. Level of income is assessed by the following household residual income calculation:

i.e. Income weekly – mortgage / rent plus council tax payments

Number of dependant family members in household

*e.g. student weekly income of £150 per week plus £40 per week Tax Credits minus weekly rent of £100 per week inclusive of council tax divided by student and two dependants (3) = Residual £30 per person per week*

Student would need to provide most recent payslips, most recent Tax Credit Award Notice, Universal Credit, Tenancy agreement or bank statements showing mortgage statements and council tax bill.

Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Allowance), Incapacity Benefit, Employment Support Allowance and Child Benefit are not taken into account.

Based on an income assessment for both Childcare 20+ and dLSF the residual income per person should be a maximum of £165.

If a student is in receipt of a means tested benefit then proof of this benefit is sufficient evidence for eligibility.

### 4.2 Exemptions

Students in the following categories are not eligible for dLSF:

- Learners in prison or a young offender institution or who have been released on temporary licence (ROTL), for example on day release
- Learners on Higher Education courses, waged Apprenticeships or provision with learning aims that are identified as wholly funded from other sources are not eligible for Discretionary Learner Support.

### 4.3 Residency Eligibility Criteria for dLSF 19+ and Childcare 20+

The residency eligibility criteria for dLSF are aligned to the residency criteria from the ESFA which can be found on their web page.

### 4.4 Refugees

Refugees are not required to meet the three year residency rule if their refugee status was confirmed in the three years prior to starting the course.

## 5. Allocation of dLSF 19+ payments

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All full and part time students aged 19+ can apply for a maximum of £750 per person per year. Need is assessed by the Advice & Guidance Officer. Evidence could be College order forms for kits, signed book lists from course tutors, information provided from Student Records re exam and registration fees (this list is not exhaustive). Students must supply receipts for anything purchased.

Students cannot apply for funding towards the following:

- Replacement passes for mislaid/lost passes
- Leisure classes
- Full or part time tuition fees where a learner does not fit into the fee remission category
- Students cannot double claim funding
- Parking

In the first instances funds for kits, uniforms and trips will be transferred directly to the relevant department. Other allocations will be made via Bank Automated Credit System (BACS), and in exceptional circumstances a cash payment maybe made.

Where an attendance issue arises for a full time student (e.g. attendance falls below 90%) the MSR Academic Procedures may be invoked. This will happen only if the issues of attendance have not managed to be addressed informally with the Progress Tutor, student and Head of Central Services. For a part time student where they do not fall under the Academic Procedures of MSR, a meeting will be set up with the Curriculum Leader, student and Head of Central Services to look at what the issues are how to resolve them. If this fails significantly for either a full or part time student then funding may be withdrawn. When funds are used to buy equipment for individuals, the equipment will remain the property of the College, this should be returned to the College when practical, taking into consideration such factors as hygiene, health and safety, and wear and tear.

## 6. Allocation of Childcare 20+

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Funding for childcare is allocated based on the maximum number of days a student is timetabled to attend College. Funds permitting and with the support of Curriculum Leader funding for study hours can be allocated, e.g. 3 days in college x £40 per day at childcare provider (September-May, inclusive of College holidays, bank holidays and school May half term)

It is expected that parents should access the 2/3 year old entitlement from the Local Authority, this should be deducted from the overall amount being allocated.

Contributions to the cost of deposits, booking or reservation fees will not be considered.

Some private childcare providers charge fees in half day or full day sessions not hourly, therefore we cannot calculate an hourly figure for a part time student. For example, a student enrolling on a GCSE English, 11-1pm would be charged for a full day of fees as this course would fall in the middle of a day and we would be obliged to pay a full day i.e. £40 approx.

## **7. Emergency Hardship Funds**

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Hardship funds are one off payments for students who are facing extreme crisis e.g. Homelessness, sudden change in domestic circumstances and need for food, travel, clothing (this list is not exhaustive). These funds should be primarily allocated by the Head of Central Services so that any other necessary support is accessed/ arranged. In the absence of the Head of Central Services the Advice & Guidance Officer can allocate funding.

## **8. Tuition Fee Scheme and Exam Fee Waiver**

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All students aged 19+ who do not receive a fee waiver for tuition fees are asked to complete a Tuition fee scheme and Exam Fee form on enrolment, assessment for the scheme is dependent upon circumstances.

The College will issue eligible, 19+ students with tuition fee and exam fee support bursary if the household income is less than £60,000, and they are not in receipt of any other financial assistance, direct or indirect, to meet the costs of their course at the College. Students will fill in a self-declaration form at enrolment.

The amount of the tuition fee payment will be a maximum of £1,525 dependent on course band (293+ GLH).

## **9. Appeals**

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Any student, who is dissatisfied with the decision made regarding the allocation of funds, may appeal in writing to the Head of Central Services within 15 term time days of receipt of letter.

The Appeals Panel will be made of a member of the College Executive team and 2 managers.

The Head of Central Services or Student Finance Administrator will present the information to the panel.

The student will be informed of the decision of the Panel within 10 term time days of receipt of the letter of appeal.

## **10. Higher Education Funding**

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Students on HE courses must apply to Student Finance England for funding. Students who are identified as having a learning difficulty / disability may be eligible to access the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and will be provided with information on how to apply.

## **11. Essential Elements**

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This policy and procedures will operate transparent, consistent systems, with clear criteria for eligibility, allowing funds to be targeted to those students in financial hardship within the EFA guidelines. This is ensured by:

- Procedures / guidelines for staff, updated annually

- Staff training and development meetings

A variety of methods will be used to publicise the availability of funds, including the application procedure and appeals procedure. This includes;

- Financial information booklet – updated annually, available on line and within the Student Information Centre
- Admissions / offer letters
- Information from admissions tutors at interview
- Information at the point of enrolment
- Information at Induction Fair
- Posters, multi media screen and Moodle
- College web page

To ensure all information is correct the Student Information staff will link with tutors to;

- Check attendance termly for Learner Support Funds 19+
- Poor attendance by students without a valid reason can result in funding being withdrawn / reduced
- Heads of Department to provide the Advice and Guidance Officer with standard kit lists / compulsory trip costs / materials and equipment lists
- Tutors to sign to agree additional funding for standard items i.e. individual kit items, course books

## **12. Monitoring effectiveness**

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Monthly updates will be provided to the College Executive Team. An annual report to CET, Corporation and Equality and Diversity Committee will report on funds spent and identify links between financial support and retention and achievement.

## **13. Confidentiality, data protection and retention**

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All personal and sensitive information will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality.

The Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are not only restrictions on disclosure of information about the College, they are bound by a common law duty of confidentiality. This duty prevents the College from releasing information about students or other stakeholders, without their consent. This duty applies to manual records as well as information held on computers.

Information which must be treated as confidential includes the names and addresses of students and any other information about them which is not publicly known, i.e. “personal data”. Accordingly, to ensure that the College does not breach its duty, no information, even if it only exists in printed form, should be disclosed unless all the relevant procedures have been followed.

All documents are held for the assessment of eligibility to the fund and audit purposes only. All information will be stored securely and treated sensitively. All documents will be kept by the College for 6 years.

## **14. Administration of the Fund**

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- There can be no virement between 16-19 and 19+ funds.
- The AEB cannot be used to support learners receiving an Adult Learner Loan.
- Administration of the fund is capped at 5% of the value of the spend of the 19/20 allocation.

## **15. Policy Update**

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The procedures will be reviewed annually in line with the release of the dLSF Guidance and are the responsibility of the Head of Central Services.

## **16. Other Sources of Funding**

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The College operates or has links to a number of other sources of funding. For further details of any of the funds listed below please contact the Student Information Centre.

- Care to Learn
- Travel Passes & Funds Policy and Procedure
- Hardship Fund
- 16-19 Bursary Fund
- Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund
- Professional and Career Development Loan
- Support via Student Loans Company (HE Students)
- Disabled Student allowance (HE Students)