

## Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) Criteria and Guidance 2011/12

### What is the Discretionary Learner Support Fund?

- This fund is to assist students from low income households whose financial difficulties might be preventing them from fully attending and participating in their College course.
- Every application is individually considered based on personal circumstances, and priority will be given to those who are most in need of help.
- There is no automatic entitlement to funding, and before any award is made evidence of financial hardship must be shown as well as evidence of course related costs.
- Funding is limited and restricted to contributions only. Students on full time courses are likely to receive higher contributions than those on part time courses, depending on overall costs.
- Funding can be used for course related costs such as books and equipment, transport and course trips, and exam fees necessary for progression or course completion.

### Am I eligible for the Discretionary Learner Support Fund?

To be eligible you must:

- be an enrolled student on a full-time or part-time Government funded course.
- be aged 19 or over on 31st August 2011
- have 'Home' student status or have been granted full 'Refugee' status, or be the spouse or child of a 'Home' student or Refugee, or be an asylum seeker who has been in the UK for longer than 6 months and no decision has been made on your claim.
- have been 'ordinarily resident' in the UK, EU or EEA continuously for the last three years before the start of your course, with 'settled status'. 'Settled status' means having either indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/ILR), or having the 'Right of Abode' in the UK.
- show evidence of a current **means tested** benefit for you or your household, i.e. Job Seekers' Allowance, Income Support, Employment & Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Pension Credit, or Working Tax Credit.  
and, where it applies, show evidence of low gross household income below:
  - £20,817 per year for a family with children
  - £17,729 for a couple without children
  - £12,971 for a single person without children.

**Please note that for all students aged under 25, your eligibility will be assessed on family/household income (not solely on your income), unless you receive a means tested benefit yourself or can otherwise provide evidence that you are financially independent (by providing tenancy agreements, household utility bills etc. which show you are self-supporting).**

### Who is not eligible to apply?

- International (overseas) students
- Students on Higher Education (HE) courses, i.e. BA/BSc/HND/HNC
- Students on Work Based Learning or waged Apprenticeships
- Students receiving support for training and learning through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentre Plus (e.g. JCP work programme), or other sources of funding.
- Students on 'Full-Cost Recovery' courses i.e. that are not funded by the Government

## What can I apply for help with?

- **Materials Charges** - Contributions for consumable materials that Kingston College provides for you.
- **Exam and validating body fees** - funding for these is limited and fees to resit exams may not be paid for. We regret we are unable to help with tuition fees.
- **Field trips** - You will only receive help with trips that are a compulsory part of, or will be beneficial to, the course that you are studying. There will be an expectation that you make a contribution yourself, particularly to residential trips.
- **Books, materials and equipment** - You will only receive assistance with books and materials that are essential to your course. Again, it is expected that students will make some contribution towards high cost courses (e.g. hair and beauty courses).  
**Students are expected to return equipment and materials wherever possible if they leave their course at any time before completion. Failure to do so may result in further action being taken to recover any such equipment or materials which could be reused by another student, taking into account factors such as hygiene, health and safety, and wear and tear.**
- **Childcare** – Contributions towards childcare can be made only to Ofsted registered childcare providers and where costs are affordable. Priority will be given to students with children aged 3 or over (see separate childcare leaflet).
- **Travel costs** - Contributions to public transport travel costs (at student discount rates where available), may be made 3 times per academic year (after each half-term) provided your attendance and progress is good and you have provided evidence of your exact travel costs (train tickets, bus passes etc.).

## What do I need to do?

To apply for funding you will need to complete an application form and also provide evidence of:

- Your age and 'Home' student or 'Refugee' status (birth certificate, passport, or Home Office documents). Documents may also be needed to prove three years' residence.
- Current proof of means-tested benefits (letters dated no more than three months prior to your application) and/or low income (2011/12 TCAN (TC602), 2011 P60 plus recent wage slips or 2010/11 self-assessment tax form). Original documents (not photocopies) are required.
- The course costs you need help with (college invoice, trip details, book and/or equipment lists)

## Where do I go and when can I come and speak to someone about this?

- Come to our Welfare Services 'drop-in' session on the ground floor at the main site any day between 12.00 and 2.00pm, or
- Book an appointment at the Reception desk in Welfare Services, or
- Ring us on 020 8268 2969 to book an appointment or ask to speak to an advisor.

## What else do I need to know about this Fund?

- Funding cannot be used to pay weekly allowances, attendance bonuses, or to make awards solely based on income without identifying specific financial need for support.
- Funding cannot be used where other public funds are available e.g. Care to Learn childcare funding, Jobcentre Plus Work Programmes.
- A student in receipt of welfare benefits (e.g. Income Support) is responsible for declaring any awards made through the Discretionary Learner Support Fund and may be asked by the Jobcentre Plus to provide evidence of this funding.
- **Funding is discretionary and not all applications will be successful. If your application is refused we will write to you to tell you why. Appeals may be made in writing to the Director of Student Services if you disagree with our decision.**