

College Fee Support Policy and Guidance 2023/24

Created by	Director of Learner Experience
Approved by	Finance, Personnel and Development Committee June 2023
Version	1.0
Date of next review	June 2024

1. Purpose

- 1.1 WM College is committed to supporting learners facing financial difficulty in their journey to achieve their learning aim in an Adult Education funded course. WM College is funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and has chosen to allocate some funding to a College Fee Support fund (CFS). The funding for the year 2023/24 will be used solely to support learners with paying their course fees.

We aim to ensure that learners, prospective learners and those supporting learners are aware of:

- The courses that qualify for funding
- The level of financial support available
- Who is eligible for funding and the evidence required to claim funding
- How to apply

2. Scope

- 2.1 The fund is open to all learners and prospective learners wishing to study a funded Adult Education course at WM College. Eligibility to receive an award from the fund is means tested.
- 2.2 Separate bursary and financial support funds are available for qualifying learners in receipt of low income to support with travel, subsistence and course materials. In addition, learners aged 19 or under or those in receipt of Advanced Learner Loans. Separate policies and guidelines are available for these funds.

3. Responsibility

- 3.1 The Director of Learner Experience is responsible for reviewing the guidance, implementing the policy and for monitoring the funds. They are also responsible for ensuring that the fund is fully explained in WM College literature.

4. Monitoring and Review

- 4.1 The policy, guidance and operational procedures will be reviewed each year and updated as necessary and in accordance with any funding body guidance.
- 4.2 The fund will be reviewed throughout the year to ensure that the allocation is appropriately and optimally utilised. This may mean that the eligibility rules vary during the year at the discretion of WM College's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or in accordance with any GLA/ESFA guidelines. Any changes will be communicated to eligible learners.
- 4.3 SLT will be updated regularly by the Director of Learner Experience with monitoring information about the expenditure and forecast.

5. Levels of Financial Support

Once an application has been received, it will be assessed, based on the individual circumstances of the applicant. Where we can provide financial assistance for the payment of fees it will be calculated as follows:

- 5.1 Funding from the College Fee Support fund is only available for courses funded by the GLA or ESFA under the Adult Education Budget funding stream.

5.2 Formula-funded courses

- 5.2.1 Learners on formula-funded courses, who do not qualify for any other fee remission and are assessed to pay a fee, can apply to the CFS for help with those course fees. If eligible, they can have up to 50% of their course fees met by the fund up to a maximum of £1,000 or for six courses, whichever is reached first

6 Eligible Learners

- 6.1 Learners who, at the time of enrolment, are on a low household income and/or in receipt of a means tested benefit, which totals less than £26,000 may be eligible for CFS. Learners must be enrolling on a WM College course that is funded under the Adult Education Budget stream. The fund will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 6.2 Funding applications cannot be backdated where an individual's circumstances change after the start of the course unless the benefit is also backdated.
- 6.3 This is a means tested fund available only where household income is under £26,000 per annum and the learner does not qualify for any other concession or reduction.
- 6.4 Learners may be paying a full or reduced fee. The fund cannot be used to support learners attending courses that are full cost and not funded by the GLA or ESFA.
- 6.5 The number of courses for which any learner can apply for financial help in any one academic year is limited to a total fee remission value of £1,000 or six courses, whichever is reached first.
- 6.6 Personal Independence Payment (formally DLA) is ignored when assessing disabled learners' income in relation to CFS.
- 6.7 Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit are excluded from the calculation of household income.
- 6.8 Further information about the evidence required for means tested benefits is provided in the course guide, on the website and at Learner Services.
- 6.9 The qualifying threshold may also be reviewed by SLT at any point in the year to ensure that the funds are being effectively and optimally utilised.

7 How to Apply

- 7.1 Requests for support from the CFS must be made at the point of enrolment. Learners enrolling at our Crowndale Road or Kentish Town sites will be asked to provide evidence of income. The Learner Services team will assess whether the learner qualifies for support and will confirm if their request has been successful. Learners will not be able to access this fund until evidence has been provided.
- 7.2 Learners enrolling online may select the CFS option when enrolling and must provide evidence of income within 10 working days of the start of their course. If evidence is not provided within these timescales, learners will be required to pay the balance of any discount given before they can continue with their studies.
- 7.3 Where CFS is not applied at the point of enrolment, requests for support with fees from this fund will only be considered up to one month from the start of the course. Requests will not be considered where a course has already ended.

8 Appeal Process

- 8.1 If learners have had an application for CFS declined, then they may submit further evidence to support their application. This will be considered by the Student Recruitment and Customer Service Manager who may arrange for a reassessment of the application or refer it to the Director of Learner Experience.

9 Waiting Lists

- 9.1 Once the funds are depleted, a waiting list will be maintained in order to keep a log of learners who may be able to receive support if further funds are made available either through additional College allocation to the fund or because a learner withdraws or cancels and the funds become available.
- 9.2 This log will be kept by the Learner Services team and does not guarantee that the learners recorded on this list will receive funds.
- 9.3 The Director of Learner Experience will inform SLT through the returns on the expenditure of the funds. It will be at the discretion of SLT to use this list.

10 Learner Progression and Data Collection

- 10.1 CFS is used to support learners in financial hardship to participate in their learning aim.
- 10.2 WM College may contact learners who have received financial support to gather information about the impact that the fund has had on their learning experience and on the improvement of their job prospects.