

Discretionary Learner Support Fund 2011 / 12

for 19+ Learners

Are you eligible?



Please read these notes carefully before completing your application form. If you do not understand any of the points, please ask your Personal Tutor or talk to a Helpzone Advisor.

Learner Support Funds are used to assist students who may have difficulties in completing their course because of financial considerations. Learner Support Funds can **contribute** towards the costs associated with your studies. Funds are limited and will run out.

No guaranteed can be given that funds will be available.

It is the responsibility of the student to pay for any cost incurred on the course that is not otherwise covered by the Learner Support Fund.

All personal and financial details will be treated in the strictest confidence. South Devon College is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. Further information about data confidentiality is available from the College Data Controllers

How do I Qualify ?

You must be: -

1. Enrolled on a Skills Funding Agency funded course.
2. Have been 'ordinarily resident' in the British Isles or European Union for purposes other than education for the last three years.
3. Be studying on a course of 6 guided learning hours or more per week, for a minimum of 10 weeks. (With exception for applications for childcare support)

BUT

Please remember that each application is judged on the basis of 'relative financial need' and that not all applications will be successful.

As applications are means tested we have set a maximum upper income level of **£20,817** pa (gross) to qualify for support . However, this may be less depending upon the number of dependants in your household – for more information on these income thresholds please speak to the Financial Welfare Co-ordinator.

Applicants who fall into a priority group as detailed on the application form will take priority over other non priority applicants.

If I am not happy with the college's decision – can I appeal?

Yes you can. If you wish to appeal you should ask for a copy of the appeals procedure, which outlines the steps you must take. Please note that unless you can provide any new information to support your appeal it is unlikely to be successful.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

PARTS 1 & 2

These sections concern your personal circumstances. Please make sure that you have answered all questions. If you are unsure about your residence status please speak to one of the Helpzone staff.

CITB Students, Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprentices, Train to Gain and New Deal participants (except New Deal for Lone Parents) are **not** eligible for Learner Support Funds.

Students receiving ALG payments may still be eligible to receive Learner Support Funds, but must declare the level of payments being received.

PART 3

Greater assistance from the fund will be given to learners who satisfy a 'Priority Group' as outlined in SFA funding guidelines. (For clarification on these groups, please speak to the Helpzone)

Priority Groups

Aged 19 + and taking 1 st full Level 2 course	Eligible for fee remission as in receipt of a JSA or ESA (working variety)	Learners on a 'Skills for Life' Programme
Aged 19 – 25 & taking 1 st full Level 3 course	Those in care or have recently left care	Learners with learning Disabilities and / or disabilities
Those on probation	Those recently made Redundant (within last 6 months)	

Learners who do not meet one of these groups but whose gross household income is below £20,817 pa (for those with dependants) may still qualify for support (on a reducing scale).

PART 4 & 5

Please make sure that you have fully completed these sections. Evidence of prior learning may be requested at a later date. (your previous qualifications will be verified)

Please note: Students aged 19 + who are applying for assistance for a course where they have previously achieved a higher level of qualification or the equivalent level of qualification will not be considered a priority for support from the Learner Support Fund (even if they satisfy the criteria for one or more of the groups outlined above). However, this may be reviewed once all priority applications have been assessed.

Those who are applying for support for a Level 2 course and who achieved a Level 2 qualification more than 5 years ago may qualify for reduced support - subject to means test.

PART 6

This section concerns your financial situation. The income table should be completed as fully as possible. If you live with your partner or parents you will also need to indicate their income.

Please note: If you are 25 + and living with parents/guardians you will be assessed as an independent student, and the assessment will be based on your individual earnings.

Proof of Income

Please provide documentary evidence of **gross** household income including self-employed earnings. Any **one** of the following will be sufficient:

- **P60(s)** – Proof of gross income for previous year (copies not originals)
- **Last 3 months or 12 weeks pay slips** (copies not originals)
- Official letter / confirmation from your employer outlining your earnings.
- Photocopies of official letter from the relevant Benefit Agencies – copies of books are not accepted.

It is **essential** to include evidence of the information provided within this section. **Your form will be returned if this information is not forwarded with your application form.**

PART 7

Please provide details of assistance requested if known. Awards for travel assistance will only be considered where students live more than 3 miles from college, and will be a 'contribution' towards the costs you incur. Please ensure that the costs outlined are accurate and are for academic year 2011/12 only.

We are unable to assist with the cost of Tuition Fees.

PART 8

Please complete this section only if you require help with childcare costs.

The college nursery, Tom Thumb exists to support college learners and therefore you are encouraged to use this facility. However, places at Tom Thumb are limited, so it is advisable to contact the nursery as soon as possible to arrange a place for your child. The contact phone number is 01803 540578.

Support for alternative childcare will be considered at a capped rate, in line with Tom Thumb's fees. All alternative provision must be OFSTED registered. A limited number of breakfast / after-school clubs will be considered for support.

All students will be expected to make a contribution to the cost of their childcare.

PART 9

Please state your reason for applying. You may attach an additional sheet if necessary.

PART 10

Please read the declaration & sign your application form, **unsigned or incomplete applications will be returned to you.**