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**ADVANCED LEARNER LOAN BURSARY POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

**2020-2021**

**Board Approved:**

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**Important information – please read and retain for future reference**

The Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund (ALLBF) offers help to vulnerable and disadvantaged loan funded learners to overcome costs associated with study which may prevent them from taking part in or continuing in learning. Due to the limited nature of the fund, no help can be given with tuition fees or accommodation costs.

The ALLBF is also available for eligible learners to provide ‘in learning’ support, such as support for teaching assistants or reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>.

Please see full ESFA guidance link below.

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904502/Advanced_Learner_Loans_funding_and_performance_management_rules_2020_to_2021_V2.pdf>

In 2020/21 the total allocation for the ALLBF is £500. V Learning Net must ensure that sufficient funding is available from the fund to meet both Learner Support costs, Learning Support costs, and also area costs.

**1.Learner support**

Your household income must be below £25,521 gross to be eligible to apply for this fund.

Learner support is available to provide financial support for learners with a specific financial hardship preventing them from taking part / continuing in learning. Below are the two categories can provide learner support:

Hardship funding – paid at a rate 1 (£50.00). General financial support for vulnerable and financially disadvantaged learners to support participation. The type of support of the application form are:

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| --- |
| Hardship – Travel Costs - Bus Pass (please see below) |
| Hardship – Travel Costs – Petrol allowance (please see below) |
| Hardship- Examination / Course Fees |
| Hardship – Equipment / Materials |
| Travel costs – if you live more than 3 miles from the training provider and qualify for this fund, V Learning Net will make a contribution towards your travel costs. Petrol allowance is based on 30 pence per mile. |

20+ childcare funding – paid at rate 3 (£250.00). For learners aged 20 or older on the first day of learning who are at risk of not starting or continuing learning because of childcare costs. All childcare providers must be OFSTED registered.If your child is eligible for local education authority (LEA) funded sessions these must be used at the chosen nursery to cover your required sessions, you may then apply for additional cover, if required.

**Eligibility**

To be eligible for the ALLBF in 2020/21:

* Learner must be aged 19 or over on the 31 August 2020.
* Learner must have applied and have been approved for an Advanced Learner Loan (ALL) for fees.
* Learner must satisfy the residency criteria set out by the ESFA by: having been a permanent resident in the EEA or other countries determined within the EEA, including those with bilateral agreements such as Switzerland or have settled status or right of abode in UK since 1st August 2017. If the learner has any other residency variations, they need to contact the V Learning Net for the eligibility form.

**General conditions**

* The Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Fund are government monies administered by VLN to assist learners experiencing financial hardship.
* Funding is limited and offered on a first come first served basis and is available to help towards course related costs. In addition to meeting the income criteria, students must demonstrate that they have a clear financial need
* Learners should be aware that any payments from the Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Fund may affect your entitlement to other benefits. It is your responsibility to declare any funds received from the Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Fund to your benefits office.
* Each application to the Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Fund will be individually assessed on its own merits and will be subject to the availability of funds.
* Expected attendance is 100% and for any learner who falls below 80% attendance, financial support may be reduced, suspended or stopped.
* Progression, performance and achievement will also be taken into account and reviewed along with attendance on a regular basis. If a learner withdraws from a course then VLN reserves the right to request the return of all monies (including books/equipment) paid under the Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Fund, this includes monies paid to childcare providers.
* Learners must complete an application form. Evidence is also required of household income to include, where relevant; benefit notices, Tax Credit Award Notices, P60 and any other required evidence of personal status.
* If a learner is living at home supported by parent(s)/guardian(s)/partner, they will

be assessed against their own and their parents’/guardians’/partners’ income,

except in exceptional circumstances.

* Means-testing will be rigorous but not excessive and evidence from other recent

income assessment will be used wherever possible.

**Applying**

To apply for a bursary, you will need to complete an application form which you can access from your tutors or training provider administrators.

It is your responsibility to ensure the application is complete. Incomplete applications will not be processed. Once your application has been processed, we will inform you if you have been successful. To check the progress of your application please contact kelly.channon@vlearningnet.org.uk.

You can apply once you are enrolled on a course through V Learning Net and have an approved advance learner loan.

Due to limited funding, V Learning Net cannot guarantee applicants will receive any or part of the funding requested. Therefore, learners should actively seek alternative financial assistance from other agencies, organisations and funds. The financial help provided is a contribution towards costs. We will process the application on a first come bases, once funding has been fully allocated a waiting list system will be implemented.

**Evidence of income**

Please submit photocopies of all documentation. We cannot accept originals; we cannot be responsible for any loss of evidence.

**Payments**

All payments are subject to an attendance rate of at least 80%. Bursaries are not guaranteed to cover all costs.

Payments to third parties will require a signed authority from the learner.

Hardship bursary will be paid on receipt of purchase or travel expense forms.

Childcare bursary will be paid directly to the provider on receipt of invoice.

**Attendance**

Your attendance will be monitored on a monthly basis and should be a minimum of 80%. All absences must be authorised and be notified to the training provider immediately. Bursary will be made as follows based on the following attendance levels:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Attendance Thresholds** | **Payment of bursary** |
| 100% - 80% | 100% |
| Below 80% | 0% |

If there are mitigating circumstances for lower attendance levels these will be considered on an individual basis.

**Decision, reviews and appeals**

You will normally be notified of our decision and any allocation by letter to your home address. No payments will be made until we receive confirmation that you have enrolled on your course. Payments will normally be made direct to you, using the bank account information you will provide. Please retain all receipts in order to claim the rewarded amounts.

Decisions regarding the payment or non-payment of monies from the Advanced Loan Bursary and the amount of any payments shall be made by the administrators, within V-Learning Network, in accordance with Government guidelines for administration of the fund.

If you are dissatisfied with the result of your review you may request an appeal. Your appeal must be made in writing, within 21 days of the date of the result of your review. Your reasons for wanting an appeal should be clearly stated and, in the first instance, addressed to Kelly Channon at V-Learning Network. If you are still dissatisfied you can then appeal to the Chief Executive of V-Learning Net, Stephen Howard.

Appeals will not be considered where a turndown has been made due to the fund being exhausted.

V Learning Net’s procedure is designed to ensure that learners have a full opportunity to raise, individually or collectively, matters of concern to them without fear of disadvantage and in the knowledge that privacy and confidentiality will be respected.

**Other**

An application form must be completed at the beginning of every academic year you attend V Learning Net as your personal circumstances may change. Learners must notify V Learning Net of any changes in their circumstances throughout the year, they will not normally be expected to repay an award, but their entitlement to further payments may be affected.

**2.Learning support**

Learning support is available to meet the cost of putting in place a reasonable adjustment, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, for learners who have an identified learning difficulty or disability, to achieve their learning goal.

Learning support must not be used to deal with everyday difficulties that are not directly associated with a learner’s learning on their programme.

V Learning Network tutors must carry out a thorough assessment to identify the support the learner needs using the learning support application form. Agree with the learner and record the outcome of your assessment in the learner file, ensuring all evidence of the assessment of the needs, planned and actual delivery is included.

Learning support will be paid at rate 2 (£150.00).

The learning support application will need to be updated half way through the course by the tutor and the learner, explaining how the learning support is helping the learner on the course, if anything has improved or if the support is the same or needs to change?

Feedback from the learners on the impact of the bursary on their learning will be monitored through quality audits throughout the year.