

Student Services Learning Support Fund Customer Charter



Our commitment to you and the terms and conditions of your Learning Support Fund

Student Services administers funding to students on behalf of the Department of Health and Health Education England.

We cover the following areas:

- NHS Student Bursaries
- Social Work Bursaries
- Educational Support Grant
- Learning Support Fund (LSF)

To do this successfully we are committed to working together with students, Higher Education Institutions and the Department of Health.

The service standards set out in this charter not only explain our commitment to you (LSF applicants) but the responsibilities of the Higher Education Institution (your university), the Department of Health and what you're committing to when you receive any Learning Support Funds.

When you apply for any elements of the Learning Support Fund, you will sign a declaration to confirm you accept the terms and conditions of this funding support including that you understand the relevant booklets for the funding you have applied for, which set out the allowances and terms of that award.



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Who does what?

Student Services is responsible for:

- assessing the eligibility of applicants studying on health professional courses starting on or after 1 August 2017 for the Learning Support Fund and notifying them of this in a timely manner
 - providing financial assistance from the Learning Support Fund to eligible students and ensuring that payment is made promptly and within set target times.
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Universities are responsible for:

- providing training programmes for health professional students
 - supporting the welfare of students through the submission of accurate and up to date information and guidance
 - authorising the claim forms of eligible students for the Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses and providing confirmation a student has sought assistance from the university's hardship fund in relation to Exceptional Support Fund applications.
 - confirming attendance for students in receipt of Child Dependents Allowance
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The Department of Health is responsible for:

- the policies and rules that describe the circumstances under which the LSF elements are payable
 - agreeing and publishing any relevant policy documents relating to this fund annually for such a time as the LSF remains available
 - providing funds
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As a student, your key responsibilities are to:

- make a timely application for all of the LSF award elements that are applicable to you
- complete your LSF application accurately and provide the correct supporting documentation requested
- inform Student Services of any changes in circumstances that may affect your entitlement to the LSF elements you may be receiving within a month of the change occurring
- reapply in a timely manner each eligible academic year of training, where applicable

Applying for LSF

What we need you to do

Register for an account on the Learning Support Fund Application System (LSFAS). This will allow you to apply for any of the three LSF allowances applicable to you. When you register you will be sent an email to activate your account. You must click the link in this email within 72 hours or you will need to start the process again with a new email address.

When you create your account, you will need to confirm your agreement to the student declaration and privacy notice.

Child Dependants Allowance (CDA)

If you have parental responsibility for at least one child who is under 15 on the first day of the first academic year of your course (or under 17 if they are registered with special educational needs), you can apply for CDA at any time.

You should submit your application and supporting evidence within nine months from the start of your academic year.

Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses (TDAE)

You can access a claim form for these via your LSFAS account. You should only complete a claim form at the end of each placement.

You should submit your application and all requested evidence within nine months of the date of your placement.

Exceptional Support Fund (ESF)

This is for students who find themselves in genuine and unforeseen financial difficulty as a result of attending their course. You can access a claim form for ESF via your LSFAS account at any point during the relevant academic year.

Your university's role

TDAE

Your university will be required to authorise your claim for these by completing the relevant section of your claim form.

ESF

Your university will be required to complete and sign the relevant section of your claim form.

CDA

Your university will be required to confirm your attendance at some point during the academic year, usually after the term two payment. If we do not receive this confirmation your term 3 payment will not be released.

What we will do

On receipt of your initial LSF registration, we will specify which original documents you should post to us.

Your LSF application is not considered complete until we receive all of your requested supporting documentation.

Our target times

Child Dependants Allowance:
25 working days

Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses:
25 working days

Exceptional Support Fund:
30 working days

Sending us your supporting documents

What we need you to do

We will require a small quantity of documentation from you in order to assess your LSF application, depending on which elements you apply for.

Whenever these are requested, please send all the documents we have specified in one go with your student coversheet. Failure to do so may result in delays to your application.

What we will do

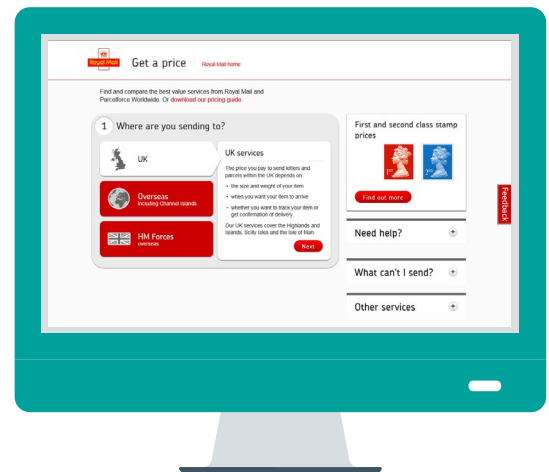
We will scan your documents and return them to you.

If you have provided a Special Delivery envelope, we will return your documents in it. If you have not enclosed a pre-paid envelope, we will return your documents using Royal Mail's standard second class postage.

We cannot be held responsible for lost or damaged documents once they have left our premises.

Our target times

We will process and return your documents within 15 working days.



Receiving payment

What we need you to do

Please provide the correct bank details on the LSFAS when you register. This will ensure you receive the LSF payments you are entitled to.

If you change your bank account details, please log into your LSFAS account and update your record **as soon as possible**. Failure to provide the correct bank details will lead to delays in your payment(s).

You must enrol on and physically attend your course in order to receive any LSF payment(s).

What we will do

Child Dependants Allowance (CDA)

If your application for CDA is approved, we will arrange for any relevant termly payments to be scheduled within the stated timeframes. We will inform you when this has been actioned.

Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses (TDAE)

If you are eligible for LSF we will process any TDAE claims you submit to us within the timeframes stated. Where there is a query with your claim or we are going to pay an amount which differs from the total you have claimed, we will explain this to you in writing.

Exceptional Support Fund (ESF)

If you apply for help from the ESF and your application is accepted, we will inform you in writing how much you have been awarded and when a payment will be made to you.

Our target times

Child Dependants Allowance:
25 working days

Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses:
25 working days

Exceptional Support Fund:
30 working days.



Discontinuing your course

What we need you to do

If you stop attending your eligible course, whether on a temporary or permanent basis, you must notify us immediately. You can do this by logging in to your LSF account and selecting the 'Interrupt/Withdraw from course' link and following the instructions so we can suspend any payments to you.

Failure to notify us could result in an overpayment which you will be expected to repay in full. Early notification can eliminate or reduce overpayment.

What we will do

We will cease any LSF payments you may be entitled to and write to you to confirm receipt of the notification.

We will then recalculate your entitlement, where applicable. If you are due an amount of LSF, this will be paid into your nominated bank account on the next available payment date.

If there is an overpayment we will write to you to confirm how much this is and how it can be repaid.

Our target times

We will suspend your payments within five working days of being notified of your discontinuation. This will be immediate if you notify us via telephone.

Your LSF account will be updated within 25 working days of receipt of the notification.

Other changes to your circumstances

What we need you to do

If you have a change in your personal circumstances that could affect your continued entitlement to any of the LSF award elements, you should contact us as soon as possible on **0300 330 1345**.

Changes you must tell us about within one month of the change occurring include:

- illness, injury or disability;
- maternity and adoption;
- extending the time normally required to complete your course;
- periods of repeat study;
- transfer to another course or university;
- returning to your course after a period of absence.

If the change is to your personal details, such as a change of home or email address, telephone/mobile number or bank details, you should simply update these on your LSFAS account as soon as you can.

What we will do

We will check your LSF account and decide whether your entitlement will be affected, depending on the nature of the change.

We will notify you of the outcome in writing (normally via the email address on your LSFAS account) within our published target times.

Our target times

We will contact you regarding your change of circumstances within 25 working days of receiving your notification.



If you have been overpaid

What we need you to do

Repay any LSF amounts that have been paid to you in excess of the amount to which you are actually entitled.

Never ignore any overpayment or reminder letters we send to you. Please contact us if you are experiencing difficulties repaying so we can help.

Overpayments can sometimes be avoided. Tell us straight away if you experience a change in circumstances that could affect your entitlement to any of the LSF award elements. This includes withdrawing from your course.

What we will do

Inform you promptly in writing if an overpayment of LSF has been made to you.

Explain clearly how it has occurred.

Advise you how it can be repaid.



Reapplying for LSF in your next academic year(s)

What we need you to do

Child Dependants Allowance (CDA)

If you are awarded CDA in your first year, you have not had a break in study and you still have parental responsibility for a child or children aged under 15 (or under 17 if they are registered with special educational needs), you should reapply for CDA via your LSFAS account in good time for the start of your new academic year.

All applications for CDA, including sending supporting evidence, should be made within nine months of the start of the academic year, at the latest. Applications received after this period will not be assessed.

You will be asked to supply your Student Finance student loan notification statement for the new academic year, where applicable.

Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses (TDAE)

As TDAE is claimed after you have completed a placement, you should continue to complete claim forms as and when these take place during the academic year.

Exceptional Support Fund (ESF)

The ESF is only awarded in specific instances of genuine and unforeseen financial difficulty. Therefore there is no requirement to apply for this each and every academic year, unless your circumstances warrant further applications.

You should only make an application for ESF when an instance of financial hardship arises. You can make more than one claim in an academic year if you have not exceeded the maximum amount available.

What we will do

CDA

Once we receive your re-application and the requested documentation, we will check your continuing eligibility for this allowance and your attendance on the course.

If accepted, we will notify you of your scheduled CDA payments for your new academic year within our published target times.

Our target times

Child Dependants Allowance:

25 working days

Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses:

25 working days

Exceptional Support Fund:

30 working days

