



19+ Discretionary Learning Support Policy

Policy Details	
Policy Owner	Head of MIS
Date produced	July 2025
Approved by	Policies & Procedures Committee
Date approved	September 2025
To be reviewed	Annually
Publication	MyUSP, USP College website

1. Statement of Intent

1.1. It is the aim of USP College to provide Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) to students with a specific financial hardship that prevents them from taking part in learning.

1.2. The College aims to provide financial information and advice that is impartial to all

2. Introduction and Purpose

2.1. The Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) is provided by the Government to help support vulnerable and disadvantaged learners who face the greatest barriers to continuing education or training.

2.2. Students should exercise their entitlement to other forms of financial support before eligibility for discretionary funding is considered, e.g. Care to Learn.

2.3. Students will be eligible for funding if:

- a. They are a citizen of the UK and Islands, have Right of Abode, or are a citizen of a country that is within the EEA
- b. They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands or EU or EEA continuously for at least the previous three years on the first day of learning and the learning is taking place in England.
- c. A non-EEA citizen is eligible for funding if they have permission granted by the UK Government to live in the UK, which is not for educational purposes, and has been ordinarily resident in the UK or at least the previous three years before the start of the learning.

2.4 In addition, anyone with any of the statuses below are eligible for funding;

- a. Refugee Status
- b. Discretionary Leave to Enter
- c. Discretionary Leave to Remain
- d. Exceptional Leave to Enter
- e. Exceptional Leave to Remain
- f. Indefinite Leave to Enter
- g. Indefinite Leave to Remain
- h. Humanitarian Protection.

2.5 Applications can only be considered when a completed DLSF application form and all correct supporting evidence/paperwork has been submitted.

2.6 For further details and exceptions to the residency rules please see the Adult Skills Funding Rules by using the link below;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-aeb-https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-skills-fund-funding-rules-for-2024-to-2025/adult-skills-fund-funding-rules-2024-to-2025>

3. General Principles

3.1. Application Procedure

- a. Students who live in a household where the income is £28,000 per annum net or below are eligible to apply.
- b. Applications for bursary are made Online via the secure Pay My Student portal. The link is available on the College website.
- c. All completed applications should be submitted within three weeks of the course start date and will be assessed at the point where all required evidence and information has been submitted. Where appropriate award payments will be backdated.
- d. Evidence must be attached to all applications confirming receipt of;
 - I. Income Based Job Seekers Allowance/Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support or Universal Credit
 - II. Evidence must be recent and dated within one month of application
 - III. Guaranteed Pension Credit or Working Tax Credit confirming income for the previous year(Max income p.a. £28,000 – estimated income not accepted).

3.2 Payment

- a. Payments will be made by BACs directly into the student's bank account. Students must fulfil the necessary attendance requirements to receive their payment. Students must adhere to the college's code of conduct for behaviour.
- b. Payments will be made to students, as follows;
 - I. Travel will be paid a week in arrears and directly linked to attendance % for that week, e.g. if attendance is 75%, the travel payment would be at 75% of award.
 - II. Equipment costs will be paid as a single payment or in 3 payments split across the academic year, based on total awarded value.
 - III. Other ad-hoc payments will be made as and when required
- c. Discretionary payments or support can be withheld as a result of a disciplinary outcome; this to be approved by the Head of Student Services and/or the Executive Director Information, Systems and Funding
- d. Applicants of the DLSF will be advised of the outcome as soon as an assessment has been completed.
- e. Appeals against actions/decisions taken in accordance with this policy must be made in writing and addressed to the Executive Director Information Systems & Funding within seven working days of the receipt of the outcome letter.
- f. Formal complaints should be made in line with the college's Compliments & Complaints Policy.

4. Items covered by the Discretionary Bursary

4.1 Types of support include the following:

- a. Course-related costs including compulsory/essential course trips, books and equipment.
- b. Learner travel costs
- c. Examination fees
- d. Accreditation fees, professional membership fees and any fees or charges due to external bodies.
- e. Registration fees

5. Childcare

- 5.1** If the student has a dependent child for whom they are the primary carer, they may be entitled to additional financial support. Additional information is available upon request.

6. Linked Policies and Procedures

- a. Student Attendance Policy
- b. Student Plagiarism Policy
- c. Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- d. Student Disciplinary Policy
- e. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- f. Compliments and Complaints Policy
- g. Data Protection Policy

7. Link to Procedure

- 7.1** Guidance notes and bursary application forms are available from the USP College website www.uspcollege.ac.uk

Equality and Diversity Statement & Impact Assessment

USP College is committed to equality of opportunity. The aim is to create an environment in which people treat each other with mutual respect, regardless of: age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender identity, transgender, sexual orientation, trade union activity or unrelated criminal convictions.

This form should be used by managers and policy owners within their area of responsibility to carry out Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments (EDIAs) in relation to protected characteristics including, but not limited to: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion and belief, Sex, Sexual orientation. The word 'policy' is taken to include strategies, policies, procedures and guidance notes; both formal and informal, internal and external.

1. Name of Policy

19+ Discretionary Learning Support Policy 2023-2024

2. Which of the following groups could be affected by this policy?

(Tick all that apply)

Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wider Community	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Complaints

Have complaints been received from anyone with one or more protected characteristic about the service provided? If yes then please give details.

NA

4. The Impact

Four possible impacts should be considered as part of the assessment:

- Positive Impact** - Where the policy might have a positive impact on a particular protected characteristic.
- None or Little Impact** – Where you think a policy does not disadvantage any of the protected characteristics
- Some Impact** – Where a policy might disadvantage any of the protected characteristics groups to some extent. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals with protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.
- Substantial Impact** – Where you think that the policy could have a negative impact on any or all of the protected characteristics. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that the negative impact on one particular protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.

Thought-provoking questions, which might help come to a decision about the impact of a policy on individuals with protected characteristics:

- Does policy outcomes and service take up differ between people with different protected characteristics?
- What key information do we have? Does data or engagement with people with protected characteristics give insights into areas of disadvantage, which relate to the policy area?
- If the policy is likely to have a negative impact on individuals, sharing particular characteristics what steps can be taken to mitigate these effects?

- h. Will the policy deliver practical benefits for certain groups?
- i. Does the policy miss opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good understanding/ relationships between groups?
- j. Do other policies need to change to make this policy more effective?
- k. Is there any elements of the policy that could be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

Use the guidance provided above and complete the following table: **(Please Tick ✓)**

Gender/Age	Positive Impact	No or Little Impact	Some Adverse Impact	Substantial Adverse Impact
Gender		✓		
Age		✓		
Disability	Positive Impact	No or Little Impact	Some Adverse Impact	Substantial Adverse Impact
Visually Impaired		✓		
Hearing impaired		✓		
Physical Disability		✓		
Specific Learning Difficulties		✓		
Global Learning Difficulties		✓		
Autistic Spectrum Disorder		✓		
Any other disability – Various		✓		
Other Factors	Positive Impact	No or Little Impact	Some Adverse Impact	Substantial Adverse Impact
Race		✓		
Culture		✓		
Religious Belief		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		
Gender Reassignment		✓		
Marriage/Civil Partnership		✓		
Pregnancy /Maternity /Paternity		✓		

Please comment on any areas where some or substantial impact is indicated. Any resulting actions must be added to the below action plan.

5. Is there anything that cannot be changed?

What cannot be changed?	Can this be justified?	If so, how?
Not applicable		
E.g., Disabled people can be treated more favorably under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. If a policy appears to treat disabled people more favorably than other equality groups, the disadvantage may be justifiable		

Please list the main actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment in your area of responsibility.
(Continue on separate sheets as necessary)

Action Plan: