

Access to Learning Fund 2011/12 Guidance Notes

Date Stamp (Office Use Only):

Please complete your details below as this will be given to you as a receipt:

Student ID: _____

Full Name: _____

Staff Initials: _____

What is the Access to Learning Fund?

The Access to Learning Fund provides financial support to help you to access and remain in higher education, and can help alleviate unexpected financial hardship. Access to Learning Fund payments can be used to help with course-related costs such as childcare costs, books, materials, and travel, and general living costs such as rent, food, and utility costs. Payments can also be used to meet exceptional costs, such as repairs to essential household equipment, assistance with priority debts, and other emergency situations that arise. The fund is not designed to meet the cost of tuition fees.

Completion of this Application form: Failure to complete any part of the form and/or failure to submit supporting evidence will result in a delay and may cause the application to be rejected.

Who can apply?

You can apply if you are a 'home' student on a:

- Undergraduate course, full-time or part-time, including a degree course, foundation degree, sandwich course, HND or HNC.
- Postgraduate course, full-time or part-time. If you are self-funded you are expected to have made adequate and realistic provision at the start of the course to fund both your tuition fees and living costs. Where you have clearly not done so, a payment from the Fund may not be appropriate

A "Home" student is defined as a student who has had the unrestricted right to remain in the UK for at least 3 years prior to the start of his or her course, and who was not here primarily for educational purposes. *This will have been assessed when you enrolled.*

You must fulfil this condition. Undergraduate, PGCE & Professional Diploma in Architecture students must be in receipt of student support funding from their Local Authority (LA) or Student Finance England (SFE) (i.e. you are in receipt of a student loan), and must take out your maximum student loan entitlement and tuition fee loan to be eligible for the Access to Learning Fund. If you are not eligible to apply to your LA (for residency reasons), or chose not to do so, you will not be eligible to apply to the Access to Learning Fund. International and EU students who are not eligible for LA/SFE support, or do not meet residency requirements cannot apply to the Access to Learning Fund. Asylum Seekers are also not eligible to apply.

If you are ineligible for student funding due to previous study/ELQ rules you can be considered for ALF **however** you are not considered as a priority within the guidance and therefore may only be considered at the end of the year - **funds permitting**. You should also have made adequate provision for living costs and payment of tuition fees – you must provide **proof** of this as well as your refusal on the grounds stated above from your LA/SFE.

Part-time students must be studying at least 50% of a full-time course in order to apply (4 modules over the course of the academic year, up to a maximum of 3 per semester). Disabled students who apply for the Access to Learning Fund must be studying at least 25% of a full-time course (2 modules over the course of the academic year). All part time undergraduate students are required to apply to their LA for the statutory student support before applying for the Access to Learning Fund.

Confidentiality Applications are only viewed by the Hardship Committee (which has responsibility for the Access to Learning Fund) and members of staff in the University delegated by the Committee to process and assess forms. Staff delegated to process and assess forms may obtain additional information about applicants from various Student Records Systems.

Data Protection Act 1998: London Metropolitan University is a data controller in terms of the 1998 legislation. The Academic Registry follows University policy in matters of data protection. The data requested in this form is covered by the notification provided by the University under the Data Protection Act. Personal data will be used solely in the department for statistical purposes and electronic records keeping. The data will not be passed to any other third party without your consent, except when the University is required to do so by law. Any formal inquiries concerning the use of data noted here should be put in writing to the Secretary of the Hardship Committee.

How to Complete an Application

Part 1: Your Personal Details

Please complete all sections of part 1 and tick the boxes that apply to you.

Part 2: Your Course Details

Please provide details of the course you are studying at London Metropolitan University. Please tick whether you are full time or part time. If you are studying 7 or 8 modules in the academic year, or you are repeating a year of a full time course, you are classed as full time. If you are studying 6 modules or less in the academic year you are classed as part time (maximum of 3 per semester). Please note that in order to be eligible for the Access to Learning Fund, you must be studying at least 4 modules over the academic year (or at least 2 modules if you have a disability).

Part 3: Income and Expenditure

Please complete both the income and expenditure sections, including partner's income (or partner's benefit entitlement) and any debts if applicable (bank account overdrafts are **not classed** as debt).

When entering your or your partner's 'net earnings', please note that 'net' means the amount earned after all tax and other deductions are taken off.

Please note that the figures provided should be **per week**. Therefore you should divide any student support amounts by 52 (e.g. divide your full yearly student loan amount by 52 to come up with a weekly figure). If bills are paid on a quarterly basis, multiply the quarterly amount by 4 and divide this amount by 52 which will result in a weekly amount. Any figures per calendar month, multiply the amount by 12 then divide by 52 to come up with the weekly amount. Any debts should be entered as total amount owed. All amounts should be as accurate as possible. Please total each column at the end.

We will only consider private vehicle costs if they are essential.

Part 4: Your Bank Details – IMPORTANT - Check the status of the account first and read the disclaimer. Please provide the name of your bank, the account number and sort code of the account you want us to pay an award to should your application be successful.

Part 5: Declaration

Please read, sign and date the declaration before submitting the form. If the declaration is not signed, your application will not be processed.

Part 6: Document Checklist

Please use the document checklist before submitting your form. You need to provide a personal statement explaining what your current financial situation is and the reasons why you are applying to the Fund. A typed personal statement is preferred. Evidence of rent can be in the form of a Tenancy Agreement or a letter signed by your landlord (or parent if making contribution to rent) confirming how much rent is paid. If you have a mortgage you must provide a mortgage statement. You must also provide bank statements for all bank accounts held and these must be dated for the last 3 months. Underline all amounts over £100, and explain what the payment is for. All the other documents shown on the checklist will vary depending on course and circumstances. If you do not provide all necessary documentation, we can not process your application.

Please note: all documents submitted must be genuine photocopies of original documents.

Handing in your application Once you have photocopied and attached all documents and the form completed you will need to submit the application to your Undergraduate or Postgraduate office. You should allow 30 minutes for your form to be checked by a member of staff.

When you submit your application part of the form will be detached and returned to you as a receipt that you must retain as proof of submission.

It is the aim to assess applications within 4 weeks of submission, although this could be longer during busy periods. You will be informed of the outcome of your application via email.

The Fund will remain open until the funds are exhausted. Forms and/or documentary evidence will not, under any circumstances, be processed after the Fund has closed.

How will my application be assessed? Applications will be treated either as 'standard' or 'non-standard'. The Committee will assess 'standard' applications under an additional need method that looks at the difference between reasonable expenditure and expected income. Your application will be treated as 'non-standard' if you have unforeseen circumstances that may require emergency financial help, or perhaps to help with priority debts. **Please note:** Even if you made a successful application in previous years there is no guarantee that you will be successful with your current application or that you will receive the same level of support as in previous years.

Payment of awards will be made in two installments: the first will be made as soon as you receive notification that your application was successful and the second will be paid week ending 30 March 2012. Payment of awards approved from 1 April 2012 will be made in one payment of the full amount. Payment of the award will be dependent upon (a) your attendance; and (b) progression in your studies.

Due to a reduction in funding awards paid this year may be lower than in previous years. If you received an award in a previous year, you are (if eligible) likely to receive less money this year.

Appeals may only be made on the grounds that your application was not assessed in accordance with agreed procedures and BIS guidelines. If you wish to appeal **you must put it in writing** to ALF Appeal, Student Services. You will receive the outcome of the appeal in writing, within approximately 2-3 weeks.

Please note that the final decision lies with the Hardship Committee and is not open to discussion.

Contact Details

If you have any queries regarding your application after submission or you require further information to make an application, please contact your Undergraduate or Postgraduate Office. Your application will take at least 4 weeks to process. If after 4 weeks you have not received a decision or you have not been contacted for more information you should contact us.

For contact details of your Postgraduate or Undergraduate Office please refer to:

[http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/registry/\\$contact-us/contact-us_home.cfm](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/registry/$contact-us/contact-us_home.cfm)

