



Department
of Health &
Social Care

NHS Financial Support for Health Students (Sixth Edition)

NHS Learning Support Fund

**Information for the academic authorities and students
for the 2022 to 2023 academic year**

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Disclaimer

Students and prospective students should not rely on the current NHS Learning Support Fund rules and allowances when planning for future academic years. Rules may be subject to review in the future and as a result may change.

Further information on the NHS Learning Support Fund will be posted on the [NHS Business Services Authority](#) (NHSBSA) website. Students are advised to check the website on a regular basis.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHSBSA Student Services will not accept responsibility for loss of any type suffered by students who have relied on out-of-date rules.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The information in this document is made pursuant to Section 63(6) of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968.
- 1.2 Words and phrases which have a particular meaning in these rules can be found in the Glossary at section 10 and must be interpreted as having the meaning set out in the Glossary.

The NHS Learning Support Fund

- 1.3 The NHS Learning Support Fund provides additional funding for eligible healthcare students. It is supplementary financial support to the mainstream student loans system. It is intended to support students in the study of elements of healthcare courses necessary in gaining professional registration and to help promote diversity in the workforce, and otherwise to help secure a continued workforce supply in future years.

NHS Learning Support Fund provisions

- 1.4 The Learning Support Fund comprises the following provisions:
 - (a) Training Grant (TG) - £5,000 per student per academic year
 - (b) Specialist Subject Payment (SSP) - £1,000 per student per academic year
 - (c) Parental Support (PS) - £2,000 per student per academic year
 - (d) Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses (TDAE) - based on expenditure
 - (e) Exceptional Support Fund (ESF) - up to a maximum of £3,000 per student per academic year

Application deadlines

- 1.5 Applications to access NHS Learning Support Fund are on an annual basis. To access NHS Learning Support Fund provisions, students must:
 - (a) register an NHS Learning Support Fund account with the NHSBSA no later than one calendar month after the start of their active study in that academic year.

(b) apply for NHS Learning Support Fund provisions no later than 6 calendar months after the start of their active study in that academic year.

1.6 In addition:

(a) TDAE claims must be made within 6 months of the relevant costs being incurred.

(b) ESF applications will be considered at any point during the academic year for which the student is making an application.

Part-time programmes and adjustments

1.7 Where the course is a designated part-time programme, the eligible student will receive, per academic year, a proportion of the amount payable for full-time courses determined as follows:

1.8 For courses which are normally 3 years full-time:

- For a 4-year part-time course 75%
- For a 5-year part-time course 60%
- For a 6-year part-time course 50%

1.9 For all other courses, the appropriate proportion of the full-time rate considering the relative length of the part-time course and equivalent full-time course.

1.10 Eligible students who begin active study part-way through an academic year will be entitled to a monthly apportionment of their annual entitlement for the period until the start of their next academic year.

Applicant undertakings

1.11 The applicant must provide a written undertaking that the particulars given are correct to the best of their knowledge or belief, and that they will notify the NHSBSA promptly of any change which might affect their eligibility for an award or the payments that they receive under an award.

1.12 The applicant, or if under the age of 18 years, a person with parental responsibility for the applicant, must give a written undertaking that, where any payment under the NHS Learning Support Fund exceeds the amount payable under these rules

for the academic year concerned, the person signing the undertaking will, if called on to do so, repay the excess amount.

HEI undertakings

- 1.13 For all elements of the NHS Learning Support Fund, the academic authority must provide appropriate authorisation in the form required by the NHSBSA to confirm that the student is in attendance on an eligible course and in active study at the point of application for funding or at any point during the academic year when required by the NHSBSA.
- 1.14 Students must register for an online account and apply for NHS Learning Support Fund funding with the NHSBSA, but payment of any NHS Learning Support Fund elements will not be made by the NHSBSA until:
 - (a) the student has enrolled on their chosen course or, in the case of continuing students, commenced the relevant academic year for which they are applying.
- 1.15 The academic authority has officially confirmed the student's enrolment to the NHSBSA.

2. General eligibility criteria

- 2.1 For each of the NHS Learning Support Fund elements detailed in the following chapters, there are specific criteria that relate directly to the funding support available.
- 2.2 However, there are also general overarching eligibility criteria that apply to all elements. These are:

Eligible programmes

- 2.3 Students must be studying on a pre-registration Nursing, Midwifery or Allied Health Profession (AHP) course as listed in Table 1 below or be studying on a dental hygiene or dental therapy course.

Table 1: List of eligible programmes

Undergraduate or postgraduate degree level courses
Nursing and Midwifery:
Nursing (Adult)
Nursing (Child)
Nursing (Mental Health)
Nursing (Learning Disability)
Nursing (Joint Nursing and social work)
Nursing (joint Nursing and Paramedicine)
Midwifery
Allied Health Professions:
Dietetics
Occupational Therapy
Operating Department Practitioner (Levels 5 and 6)
Orthoptics
Orthotics and prosthetics
Paramedicine
Physiotherapy
Podiatry/Chiropody
Radiography (Diagnostic and Therapeutic)
Speech and Language therapy
Other:
Dental Therapy and Dental Hygiene (Levels 5 and 6)

Eligible students

- 2.4 To qualify for any element of the NHS Learning Support Fund, students must:
- (a) be eligible for tuition fees and maintenance support from the Student Loans Company.
 - (b) Be ordinarily resident in the UK.
 - (c) be studying at an academic authority in England.
 - (d) be in active study.
- 2.5 Students will ordinarily be required to provide evidence in the form of the original letter from the Student Loans Company that demonstrates that they are in receipt of a loan for tuition fees and maintenance support.
- 2.6 Some students who are eligible for student loans but choose not to apply for personal reasons will have their eligibility assessed on a case-by-case basis by the NHS BSA Student Services. These students will need to demonstrate that they meet the required eligibility criteria as set out by the Student Loans Company.

Second degree Paramedicine students

- 2.7 For the 2022 to 2023 academic year, students studying Paramedicine can also have their eligibility assessed on case-by-case basis if they are ineligible for tuition fees and maintenance support because they have an equivalent or lower qualification. Students will be eligible for NHS Learning Support Fund provisions from the start of their 2022-23 academic year.

Other forms of financial assistance

- 2.8 A student will not be eligible for support from the NHS Learning Support Fund in any of the following circumstances:
- (a) They are paid for time off by their employer to attend the course and continue to receive a wage or salary whilst they train.
 - (b) They are in receipt of financial support while they train, as provided by an NHS trust or other NHS entity, including Health Education England. Examples include salary support and paid sandwich years.

Conditions applying to an award from the NHS Learning Support Fund

- 2.9 The NHS Learning Support Fund is awarded and payable subject to the following conditions:
- (a) The student applies and supplies the NHSBSA with such information it considers necessary for determining eligibility within the application time limits set out in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6.
 - (b) The student signs a declaration to confirm that they will inform the NHSBSA as soon as possible in the event of any of the following circumstances:
 - (i) they cease to attend the course and do not intend or are not permitted to return
 - (ii) they transfer to another course, even if the new course is an eligible course and / or is at the same academic authority
 - (iii) they interrupt training temporarily for reasons of maternity or adoption
 - (iv) they are absent from the course for reasons relating to a disability which impacts their ability to attend the course for any period longer than 60 days
 - (v) there is any change to the date for starting or completing the course after they have submitted their application for support from the NHS Learning Support Fund
 - (vi) there is any change to their contact details
 - (vii) there is any change to the bank or building society account into which NHS Learning Support Fund payments are to be made
 - (c) The student continues to attend the course for which the NHS Learning Support Fund is awarded, unless granted authorised leave of absence as set out in these rules.
 - (d) The student undertakes to promptly repay any overpayment, arising for any reason, when requested to do so by the NHSBSA.
- 2.10 The NHSBSA may suspend, reduce, or terminate an NHS Learning Support Fund award, if, after consulting the academic authority, it appears to them that the student is in breach of the conditions in paragraph 2.9(a) to (d). The NHSBSA may

also suspend payment if requested to do so by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority or by NHSBSA Local Counter Fraud Specialists pending enquiries concerning possible fraud in relation to the payment of the NHS Learning Support Fund.

- 2.11 The NHSBSA will rely on information provided by the academic authority to determine a student's period of active study.

3. Training Grant

- 3.1 To claim the Training Grant students must be:
- (a) an eligible student under Section 2.
 - (b) on an eligible course which started on or after 1 August 2017.
- 3.2 Eligible students can receive a non-means tested Training Grant of £5,000 per academic year.
- 3.3 The NHSBSA will pay the annual entitlement of the Training Grant awarded in 3 termly instalments.
- 3.4 To receive the Training Grant, a student must be in active study on one of the following dates, relevant to the start of their academic year:

Table 2 – Active study dates for receipt of the Training Grant

Start of academic year	Relevant date in attendance
September or October 2022	1 November 2022
January or February 2023	1 March 2023
March or April 2023	1 May 2023

- 3.5 For each academic year, the NHSBSA will ask academic authorities to provide and confirm student attendance data to ensure any Training Grant payments are being made appropriately.

4. Specialist Subject Payment

4.1 Subject to meeting the general eligibility criteria set out in Section 2, eligible new students starting on or after 1 September 2020, commencing one of the following healthcare courses in Table 3 below, will receive an additional Specialist Subject Payment of £1,000 per academic year.

Table 3 – Courses eligible for the Specialist Subject Payment

Courses starting on or after 1 September 2020 only
Mental Health Nursing
Learning Disability Nursing
Radiography (Diagnostic and Therapeutic)
Prosthetics and Orthotics
Orthoptics
Podiatry

4.2 The Specialist Subject Payment will be paid to eligible students in 3 monthly instalments per academic year subject to the relevant active study dates set out in Table 2, Section 3. This will be for the duration of the course unless the student,

- (a) withdraws; or
- (b) transfers to another course that is not a specialist subject.

5. Parental Support

- 5.1 To claim Parental Support students must:
- (a) be an eligible student under Section 2.
 - (b) Have parental responsibility for a child who is under 15 years of age, or under 17 years of age if the child is registered with special educational needs within the meaning of section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014.
- 5.2 Eligible students can claim a non-repayable grant of £2,000 per academic year. This is regardless of the number of dependent children for which the student has parental responsibility.
- 5.3 The NHSBSA will pay the total allowance in 3 termly instalments each academic year subject to the relevant active study dates set out in Table 2, Section 3.
- 5.4 Students applying for Parental Support for a child born partway through an academic year will be eligible to receive a pro-rata award of the allowance, payable from the month that the change occurred.

6. Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses (TDAE)

- 6.1 Students who meet the eligibility criteria as set out in Section 2 are entitled to have some of the costs arising from attendance at a practice placement reimbursed to them, provided that a valid claim is made within 6 months of the cost being incurred.
- 6.2 These costs are specified in paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 and calculated based on the rules set out in paragraph 6.9, subject to the limits set out in Table 4 below.

Types of cost

- 6.3 The types of cost that can be claimed while on practice placement are as follows:
- (a) any excess cost arising from daily travel between the student's normal accommodation and the practice placement site.
 - (b) any excess cost arising from one weekly return journey between the student's normal accommodation and their temporary accommodation.
 - (c) any excess cost arising from daily travel from the temporary accommodation to the practice placement site.
 - (d) The additional cost of being required to travel to visit other practice placement sites or the homes of patients while on practice placement, where the student is not given free transport.
 - (e) The cost of temporary accommodation near the clinical practice site where it is not practicable for the student to travel there from his or her normal accommodation a daily basis, provided that the temporary accommodation is not the parental home.
 - (f) Where the student is attending a part of the course outside the UK, the additional travelling costs incurred within or outside the UK that are more than the student's normal daily cost of travel between their normal accommodation and the academic authority they normally attend.
 - (g) Where the student is attending a part of the course outside the UK, any essential additional, receipted costs such as accommodation (up to the maximum nightly equivalent rate in GBP as set out in Table 4), medical insurance, tests, and any fees for visas.

- 6.4 No other costs, other than those falling within para 6.3, such as refreshments, placement arrangement fees, tips and phone calls incurred whilst attending a practice placement will be reimbursed.
- 6.5 The types of cost outlined in paragraphs 6.3 must:
- (a) be necessarily incurred as part of attending a necessary part of the course which constitutes supervised clinical practice at premises other than those of the academic authority providing the course. Those premises may be located either within the UK or overseas.
 - (b) not already be covered by any disabled students' allowances awarded under Student Loans Company provisions.

Means of travel

- 6.6 Students are expected to travel by the cheapest form of transport available where it is reasonably practical to do so. This may be by public transport or private vehicle.
- 6.7 Where the conditions of paragraph 6.6 are met, students who choose to travel in a private vehicle (including pedal cycles) should:
- (a) Ensure that they have adequate insurance cover for all risks associated with this use of the private vehicle.
 - (b) understand that by travelling by private vehicle, they do so at their own risk.
 - (c) be aware that the provision in these rules for reimbursement of the costs of travel by private vehicle do not constitute any acceptance of liability by the academic authority, the NHSBSA or any other NHS body for the risks arising from the use of the private vehicle concerned.
- 6.8 Users of pedal cycles are advised to ensure that the equipment is fit for purpose and adequate clothing is used.

Calculation

- 6.9 The costs to be reimbursed are calculated on the following basis:
- (a) For travel:

- (i) the receipted cost of travel by the most direct route by public transport using the most favourable rates, concessionary schemes, or facilities available to the student
 - (ii) where the student travels in a private vehicle, or hire car where appropriate, the distance travelled by the most direct route at the mileage rate set out in Table 4, and the actual receipted cost of any parking, tolls or ferries necessarily incurred on that journey
 - (iii) less the cost of daily or weekly travel in term time, between the student's normal accommodation and the student's academic authority for the relevant period and calculated as described in (iv) and (v) below. For students attending a blended learning programme, this deduction will not be applied, given students are rarely required to attend their academic authority in person.
 - (iv) for students attending a full-time course, the usual costs of travel will be calculated based on the daily cost of their travel between their normal accommodation and the academic authority providing their course
 - (v) for students attending a designated part-time programme, the usual costs of travel will be calculated based on either the daily cost of their travel for the days that they travel between their normal accommodation and the academic authority, or their weekly costs for such travel, where this is less.
- (b) For temporary accommodation, the costs are the actual receipted cost of the temporary accommodation up to the limits set out in Table 4. Receipts should be submitted in line with NHS BSA guidance, and:
- (i) addressed to, or otherwise include, the name of the student making the claim
 - (ii) include the dates/period that the accommodation was booked/used as well as the exact nightly cost(s) that were charged for each night
- (c) For all other costs reimbursable under the rules above, the actual receipted cost.

Application for reimbursement

- 6.10 Students must submit claims for travel and dual accommodation expenses, including the appropriate receipts or invoices, to their academic authority, in the format required by the NHSBSA.

- 6.11 All claims must be checked by the academic authority before they are sent to the NHSBSA. It is the responsibility of each institution to authorise and confirm the validity of each student's claim in line with the requirements set out in this section.
- 6.12 Without exception, reimbursement for practice placement expenditure will only be issued to the student and not to a third party.
- 6.13 Where practice placement accommodation is booked by the academic authority on behalf of the student, any invoices issued to the student for payment of the accommodation must include:
- (a) the start and end dates of the booking.
 - (b) the actual nightly cost charged by the accommodation provider, which may not necessarily be the same as the maximum nightly rate limit shown in Table 4.
- 6.14 Consideration may be given by the NHSBSA for reimbursement of cost-effective block bookings made by the student, or on their behalf by the academic authority, where weekends are required to be included as part of the booking.

Table 4: Limits on reimbursable travel and dual accommodation expenses

Cost	Limit
(a) Public transport	Actual cost
(b) Travel in or on the student's own vehicle:	
Pedal cycle	20p per mile
Motor vehicles	28p per mile
Parking, tolls and ferries	Actual cost
(c) Temporary Accommodation:	
Commercial accommodation	Up to £55 per night
Non-commercial accommodation	Up to £25 per night

7. Exceptional Support Fund

7.1 The Department recognises that, in a small number of cases, there may be scenarios where students find themselves facing unexpected financial hardship. This section, therefore, sets out the provisions under which the NHSBSA can award funds to support exceptional cases where students find themselves in financial hardship in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.

Conditions applying to the award

7.2 To be eligible for assistance from the Exceptional Support Fund (ESF) a student must:

- (a) be an eligible student under Section 2.
- (b) satisfy the NHSBSA that there is a demonstrable shortfall between their income and expenditure, which they are unable to manage by their own actions.
- (c) be in genuine hardship.
- (d) satisfy the NHSBSA that they have exhausted all other available avenues of funding support, including the academic authority hardship funds as described in the academic authority's Office for Fair Access (OFFA) agreements.
- (e) sign an undertaking to repay any sums which are overpaid or paid in circumstances where it later becomes clear that the student was ineligible for the grant.

7.3 Where the NHSBSA agrees that a student meets the conditions in paragraph 7.2 and, subject to the criteria in paragraph 7.5, a non-repayable grant of up to £3,000 per academic year may be made to assist the student.

7.4 Funding, or a proportion of the allotted ESF funding, may be recoverable if the student meets any of the criteria referred to in Section 2, paragraph 2.8, or otherwise has any other change in circumstances that may impact on their eligibility to receive ESF

7.5 ESF awards will not be made in the following circumstances:

- (a) for the purpose of making emergency payments, such as repairs to essential household equipment, stolen items, car repairs (this list is not intended to be exhaustive).

- (b) helping to meet the costs of tuition fees where the student is eligible for, but has not taken out, a tuition fee loan.
- (c) where there is evidence of money mismanagement.
- (d) making good a default in contribution by a parent, spouse, civil partner or partner.
- (e) meeting a temporary shortfall in income, such as where a student is awaiting payment of a maintenance award or academic authority hardship funds, reimbursement of travel expenses or requires a loan.

Application and evidence

7.6 An application for the Exceptional Support Fund must be made in such a form and with such supporting information as the NHSBSA may require to assess the application. The student must also provide:

- (a) evidence that they have taken up all the student loan funding to which they are entitled, where applicable.
- (b) evidence that they have applied for hardship funds to their academic authority, where there is provision for these at the academic authority they attend, and details of the outcome.
- (c) details and evidence of their income and expenditure in the format prescribed by the NHSBSA.

Student expenditure

7.7 Students must pay for essential items such as food, bills, clothes, leisure, rent, travel, and course costs. As some students may choose, or be required to, spend more than others on those items, composite living costs and variable expenditure will be applied in each assessment.

Table 5: Composite living cost rates

Student profile	Living outside London (weekly)	Living in London (Weekly)
Single	£90	£121
Student with partner	£122	£165

Children (each)	£72	£72
Family premium	£20 one-off cost will be added where a student has at least one child	£20 one-off cost will be added where a student has at least one child

Calculation

7.8 The method of calculation for the ESF award is fully detailed in the NHSBSA Exceptional Support Fund application form and guidance. It is determined by using the standard rates of:

- (a) living costs.
- (b) the financial resources that are available to the student at the time of the application. (The appropriate higher rates and weighting will be applied to those students attending an academic authority located in London).

Assumed income

7.9 Students are expected to have made provision for their living costs before commencing their studies, therefore when calculating income for the ESF, the NHSBSA will normally apply an assumed income figure, unless the student falls under one or more of the following categories:

- (a) has a disability or long-term health condition that impacts on their ability to work.
- (b) has caring responsibilities for a person other than their own child or children that impacts on their ability to work.
- (c) is a care leaver.
- (d) is irreconcilably estranged from both parents.
- (e) has no living parent.

8. Changes in circumstances

- 8.1 In any instances where a student's circumstances change in a way which may disrupt their studies, their eligibility for the NHS Learning Support Fund, or the student's ability to meet the conditions attached to the NHS Learning Support Fund, the student should seek advice from the NHSBSA as soon as possible.
- 8.2 Access to the NHS Learning Support Fund's allowances is typically available only when:
- (a) the student is in active study.
 - (b) for the time that it normally takes to complete the course.
- 8.3 Where students are (a) no longer in active study or (b) have returned to active study, but require more time to complete their course, they may continue to receive Learning Support Fund allowances. The following sections outline these circumstances.
- 8.4 Any relevant changes in a student's circumstances must be notified to NHSBSA within one month of the change happening.

Disability

- 8.5 The NHSBSA and DHSC may agree to continue payments of the NHS Learning Support fund to students who are absent because of their disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, where it concludes doing so amounts to a reasonable adjustment. The NHS BSA will consult the academic authority and consider whether there is a realistic prospect of the student returning to their course and qualifying within a reasonable timescale.
- 8.6 The NHSBSA and DHSC may agree to continue payments of the NHS Learning Support fund to students who require more time to complete their course, where it concludes doing so amounts to a reasonable adjustment. The NHS BSA will consult the academic authority and consider whether there is a realistic prospect of the student returning to their course and qualifying within a reasonable timescale.

Maternity

- 8.7 Subject to paras 8.8 to 8.13 a student who is otherwise eligible for the NHS LSF is entitled to a maternity award.
- 8.8 The maternity award will be paid during periods of pregnancy and maternity leave authorised by the academic authority providing the course up to a maximum of 12 months. If there are exceptional and mitigating circumstances, the NHSBSA may extend the maximum 12-month period, subject to provision of adequate evidence.
- 8.9 The maternity award includes all elements of the NHS LSF that the student would otherwise be eligible for except Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses, which is associated with actual attendance at the course.
- 8.10 The academic authority must apply for a maternity award on behalf of their student in the form required by the NHSBSA, including confirmation by the academic authority providing the course of the periods of pregnancy and maternity leave for which authorisation has been granted.
- 8.11 If a student's maternity leave spans two academic years, students must continue to apply for the NHS Learning Support Fund on an annual basis as set out in para 1.5 of the NHS Learning Support Fund rules. This will ensure that the student continues to receive payments from the maternity award across the two academic years.
- 8.12 The academic authority should inform the NHSBSA when the student returns from any period of pregnancy and maternity leave to ensure that their NHS Learning Support Fund funding continues, and that Parental Support in relation to their child (if eligible) can be added to their account.
- 8.13 Only one maternity award will be made in relation to a single pregnancy, irrespective of how many children are born. The maternity award remains payable irrespective of whether the child or children concerned are still-born or die after birth.

Adoption

- 8.14 Subject to paras 8.15 to 8.20, a student who is otherwise eligible for the NHS LSF and who expects to become the primary carer for a child under 18 which they have adopted is entitled to an adoption award.
- 8.15 The adoption award will be paid in respect of all periods of adoption leave authorised by the academic authority providing the course up to a maximum of 12

months. If there are exceptional and mitigating circumstances, the NHSBSA may extend the maximum 12-month period, subject to provision of adequate evidence.

- 8.16 If a student's adoption leave spans two academic years, students must continue to apply for the NHS Learning Support Fund on an annual basis as set out in para 1.5 of the NHS Learning Support Fund rules. This will ensure that the student continues to receive payments from the adoption award across the two academic years.
- 8.17 The adoption award includes all elements of the NHS LSF that the student would otherwise be eligible for except Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses, which is associated with actual attendance at the course.
- 8.18 The academic authority must apply for an adoption award on behalf of their student in the form required by the NHSBSA, including confirmation by the academic authority providing the course of the period for which adoption leave has been granted.
- 8.19 The academic authority should inform the NHSBSA when they return from adoption leave to ensure that their NHS Learning Support Fund funding continues after the end of their adoption leave, and that Parental Support in relation to their child (if eligible) can be added to their account.
- 8.20 Only one adoption award will be made in relation to a single adoption event, irrespective of how many children are adopted.

Maternity Support Award

- 8.21 Subject to paras 8.22 to 8.28, a student who is otherwise eligible for the NHS LSF and who:
- (a) is taking leave authorised by the academic authority providing the course to care for the new-born child and mother, and
 - (b) has, or expects to have, responsibility for the upbringing of the child, and
 - (c) is the spouse, civil partner or partner of the child's mother or is the biological or adoptive father or nominated carer of the child.
- is entitled to a maternity support award.
- 8.22 The maternity support award will be paid in respect of all periods of leave authorised by the academic authority providing the course up to a maximum of 4

weeks to enable the student to provide support to a mother and child during and after childbirth.

- 8.23 The maternity support award includes all elements of the NHS LSF that the student would otherwise be eligible for except Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses, which is associated with actual attendance at the course.
- 8.24 The academic authority must apply for a maternity support award on behalf of their student in the form required by the NHSBSA, including confirmation by the academic authority providing the course of the period for which authorised leave has been granted.
- 8.25 A maternity support award applies to leave taken during and after the birth of the child, but not to leave taken before the birth of a child to support the mother during pregnancy.
- 8.26 The leave may be taken at any time within the first year after the birth of the child, either as one 4-week period or in several shorter periods which add up to 4 weeks.
- 8.27 Only one maternity support award will be made in relation to a single pregnancy, irrespective of how many children are born. The maternity support award remains payable irrespective of whether the child or children concerned are still-born or die after birth.
- 8.28 Where a student has been absent whilst on maternity support leave, then the period of maternity support leave will be disregarded for the purposes of calculating the time it normally takes to complete the course, up to maximum of 4 weeks.

Other circumstances

- 8.29 Eligible students will not normally be considered absent from their course if they are unable to attend due to illness or injury and their authorised absence has not exceeded 60 days
- 8.30 Eligible students may continue to receive funding during a period of absence. Once they have returned to their course, students may also receive funding for up to 12 months beyond the time it takes to normally complete their course.
- 8.31 In both scenarios described in para 8.30, The NHSBSA and DHSC may agree to continue payments of the NHS Learning Support fund providing the NHSBSA, after consulting the academic authority, concludes that:

- (a) The request for additional funding is due to circumstances that could reasonably be expected to cause disruption to their studies; and
- (b) there is a reasonable prospect of the student qualifying within a reasonable timescale (up to 12 months beyond the time it takes to normally complete their course)

8.32 Circumstances that could reasonably be expected to cause disruption include:

- (a) mental ill-health
- (b) physical illness and injury
- (c) bereavement
- (d) a caring responsibility

8.33 The list of examples above is not intended to be exhaustive. The NHSBSA retains the discretion to judge each case on its individual merits and will keep a record of decisions made to ensure consistency and fairness to all students.

8.34 Complaints and reviews regarding any decisions will be dealt with through the procedures outlined in Section 9. Where a student has had an application for additional funding refused, this decision applies to all elements of the NHS Learning Support Fund.

9. Complaints, reviews and appeals

Complaints

9.1 If a student is concerned about the way in which an NHS Learning Support Fund application, or any other matter in relation to the NHS Learning Support Fund is being dealt with, the student should first contact the NHSBSA on 0300 330 0521. This is likely to be the fastest way to resolve any issues about a current payment or application.

9.2 If a student remains dissatisfied with the way in which a NHS Learning Support Fund application, or any other matter in relation to the NHS Learning Support Fund has been dealt with, the student may make a formal complaint to the NHSBSA in writing to:

The Review Section
NHSBSA Student Services
Hesketh House
200-220 Broadway
Fleetwood, FY7 8SS

Or by email to: nhsbsa.lsfcomplaints@nhs.net

9.3 The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has asked the NHSBSA to treat all complaints in a fair, objective and consistent manner; to take corrective and remedial action where possible; and to identify any areas for improvement in the operation of the NHS Learning Support Fund.

9.4 If a student has exhausted the NHSBSA formal complaints procedure and believes their complaint has been inappropriately or unfairly dealt with by the NHSBSA, the student may escalate their complaint to the Department via email.

9.5 A student should include in their email their explicit consent that the Department may share the necessary personal information with the NHSBSA to investigate their complaint fully. The Department aims to respond to complaints within 20 working days. A student should email to: educationandtraining@dhsc.gov.uk

9.6 If a student is unable to access email services, then the student can alternatively send a letter to the following address:

NHS Learning Support Fund Complaint
F.A.O. Education and Training Funding
NHS Workforce: Education, Modernisation & Funding
Department of Health and Social Care

Quarry House, Quarry Hill
Leeds, LS2 7UE

Reviews

9.7 Where a student believes a decision made by the NHSBSA in relation to an award from the NHS Learning Support Fund is incorrect, they may ask for the decision to be reviewed. Such a review can include, but is not limited to, the following matters:

- (a) the outcome of a funding application
- (b) decision on the amount of funding payable
- (c) suspension, reduction, or termination of funding.

9.8 The request for a review should be made within 28 days of notification of the decision.

9.9 Any application for a review must be made in writing to:

The Review Section
NHSBSA Student Services
Hesketh House
200-220 Broadway
Fleetwood, FY7 8SS

Or by email to: nhsbsa.lsfcomplaints@nhs.net

Appeals

9.10 If after being informed of the result of a review a student continues to believe that a decision made by the NHSBSA in relation to the NHS Learning Support Fund is incorrect the student may appeal to the DHSC.

9.11 The request for an appeal should be made within 28 days of notification of the decision of the review, and a copy of the original decision, request for review, and review decision should be included with the appeal. The Department aims to respond to appeals within 20 working days.

9.12 Any application for an appeal to the Department must be made only after the review process has been completed by the NHSBSA and be made in writing.

9.13 A student should include in their email their explicit consent that the Department may share the necessary personal information with the NHSBSA in order to

investigate the student's appeal fully. A student should email to:
educationandtraining@dhsc.gov.uk

- 9.14 If a student is unable to access email services, then the student can alternatively send a letter to the following address:

NHS Learning Support Fund Appeal
F.A.O Education and Training Funding
NHS Workforce: Education, Modernisation & Funding
Department of Health and Social Care
Quarry House, Quarry Hill
Leeds, LS2 7UE

- 9.15 If a student is still not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may refer their case to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, who will consider their appeal independently. The Ombudsman can be contacted in writing at the following address:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Milbank Tower
30 Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP
Telephone: 03450154033

10. Glossary

Word or phrase	Meaning for the purpose of these rules
Academic authority	The Institute of Higher Education recognised by the DHSC and the NHSBSA as offering a course for which the NHS Learning Support Fund may be payable. Includes a person acting with the authority of such an institution.
Academic year	The academic year is a period of 12 months study starting between 1st September 2022 and 31st August 2023
Active study	A student is deemed to be in active study if they are: (a) regularly attending the premises of the academic authority for academic learning; or (b) on a recognised study period at other premises (such as designated study weeks); or (c) attending premises associated with supervised clinical practice learning
Annual entitlement	The maximum amount of Training Grant, Specialist Subject Payment and Parental Support that a student may be entitled to in any one academic year, as set out in these rules.
Assumed income	In relation to the Exceptional Support Fund, it is expected that most students can supplement their income - for example, through part-time or holiday work, savings, bank loans and/or family contributions. Instead of taking the actual amount of income gained in this way, a fixed standard annual amount is applied to each student, except students who fall under paragraph 7.9 (a) to (e).
Blended learning	Blended learning programmes provide a flexible way to fit study around work and life, using mainly digital technologies. Health Education England is working with several universities to deliver blended learning degree

	programmes. Only students that are on these programmes will be considered blended learning students.
Commercial accommodation	<p>Accommodation provided subject to a commercial rental agreement, which, whether a tenancy or a licence, imposes conditions upon the parties to the agreement, including payment, that are enforceable at law.</p> <p>Note - booking accommodation advertised on online platforms through informal, offline arrangements will be considered non-commercial accommodation (see definition below)</p>
Composite living costs	In relation to the Exceptional Support Fund, all students must pay for essential items such as food, bills, clothes and leisure/entertainment, these are known as Composite Living Costs and one-off fixed amounts will be applied for these in all cases at the rates outlined in Table 5.
Full-time	<p>In relation to an eligible course, a course in which the student is required to attend the course for at least 30 weeks in each academic year except the final year of multi-year courses, and at least 8 weeks in the final academic year of multi-year courses; and to undertake in each academic year an average of at least 21 hours a week in study or practice placement or other work experience required by the course.</p> <p>In relation to a student, a student attending such a course.</p>
London	<p>The area comprising the City of London and the Metropolitan Police District as defined by section 76 of the Greater London Act 1963 prior to its substitution by section 323(1) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999.</p>
Non-commercial accommodation	Generally, where the student is staying with friends or relatives and/or in a room in a private house, where there is no formal tenancy or contract in place, without a formal rental payment.

Normal accommodation	A student's primary accommodation during term time, whether at the parental home or away from the parental home.
Ordinarily resident	<p>Lawful and habitual residence through choice and for a settled purpose throughout the period concerned.</p> <p>A person is to be treated as ordinarily resident in the area in question if the person would have been so resident but for the fact that person, their spouse or civil partner, their parent, or (in the case of a dependent direct relative in the ascending line) their child or child's spouse or civil partner is or was temporarily employed outside the area in question.</p> <p>For the purposes of this definition, temporary employment is as defined in the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) Regulations 2022.</p>
Paramedicine	This term refers to all pre-registration courses that lead to professional registration as a paramedic. This includes courses names such as paramedics/paramedical/paramedic science.
Parent/Parents	A parent or parents by nature or legal adoption. But not a guardian step-parent or foster parent (unless they have legally adopted the student concerned).
Parental home	The home of a parent or guardian of the student or, for members of a religious order, a house belonging to that religious order.
Parental responsibility	Exists where a person has the same legal rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority as a parent for a child and for the child's property
Partner	A person who is ordinarily living with the student as if they were the student's spouse or civil partner.
Part-time	In relation to a course, any course that does not satisfy the definition of a full-time course above. In relation to a student, any student attending a course that does not satisfy the definition of a full-time course above.
Private vehicle	Includes a pedal cycle, motor vehicle and any other motor vehicle owned by the student or otherwise used by the

	student with the owner's consent, other than a hire vehicle and subject to the requirements in Para 6.7 (a) to (c).
Salary support	Regional support provided by Health Education England or a local NHS Trust to enable students to attend a pre-registration healthcare course and receive an NHS salary whilst they train.
Special educational needs	A child or young person has special educational needs within the meaning of the Children and Families Act 2014 if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
Student loan	A loan provided by the Student Loans Company.
Student Loans Company	Administration body for UK mainstream student loan support as introduced by the Education (Student loans) Act 1990 by which government supported loans are made available to eligible students. For NHS Learning Support Fund purposes, may refer to either Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland or the Student Awards Agency for Scotland, whichever is appropriate.
Temporary accommodation	Secondary accommodation taken by a student for the purposes of attending a compulsory practice placement which forms part of his or her course, where it is not practical for the student to travel to the placement site from their normal accommodation on a daily basis.
UK	The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, comprising England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland but not the Islands.
Variable expenditure	In relation to the Exceptional Support Fund, certain expenses, such as rent, travel and childcare, vary between individuals and as some may be required to spend more than others on these, the actual annual amount for these costs will be applied, rather than a fixed figure.

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