

**GUIDANCE ON APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING FOR LEARNING
AND DEVELOPMENT OF SBC EMPLOYEES**

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This guidance is to be read in conjunction with the Learning and Development Policy and its aim is to support managers and their employees with their developmental needs, including how to seek funding for such development, if required.
- 1.2** The council will consider either full or partial funding and non financial support for eligible employees (or support for employees self-funding their course of study) who are studying for relevant professional qualifications which are either a statutory requirement for them to achieve or if not a statutory requirement are essential in the job role to establish a credible level of professional competence.
- 1.3** In the first instance, applicants should review the Slough Academy pages on SBCinsite via this link: <http://insite/people/more/the-slough-academy/> to consider whether their development needs can be met through Apprenticeship Levy Funding. If that is not the case, managers and their employees must complete the process outlined in this guidance.
- 1.4** The council will also consider full or partial funding for any learning events of half a day's duration and upwards, if it is relevant to their job role and has been signed off by their line manager in their annual performance review as part of their Personal Development Plan.
- 1.5** A programme of study/learning event may be either a course commissioned by Slough Borough Council or an external body, including a university or college.
- 1.6** Funding will include the cost of membership fees to relevant professional bodies if this is a pre-requisite of study.
- 1.7** Where employees opt to self fund qualifications, Slough Borough Council may consider applications for non financial assistance such as paid time off from work, if the applicant meets the criteria.

2: Steps to completing a funding application for a qualification:

- 2.1** Any application must be clearly linked to a recognised performance and/or job requirement and featured in an applicant's current Personal Development Plan within their Annual Performance Review Form, which has been signed by their line manager. For details on the performance review process, please go to this SBCinsite link: <http://insite/people/your-development/performance-review/>
- 2.2** Employees wishing to apply for consideration to study in accordance with this guidance should meet all of the criteria below:
 - The employee is permanent and has successfully completed their probation period.
 - The employee's line manager needs to demonstrate fairness in the application process within their Service.

- The course is identified within their Personal Development Plan within the Performance Review process.
- The employee has the aptitude and ability to successfully complete the course and meet the course requirements.
- The employee has read and agreed to adhere to the SBC Learning and Development Policy (via this link: <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/>)
- The employee can demonstrate that their attainment of the qualification will assist their Service or Council in achieving one or more of its business objectives.

2.3 Social Workers and Occupational Therapists applying for funding for post qualifying training should have a CPD profile or provide a reflective statement (maximum 1000 words), critically analysing a piece of strengths based work undertaken in relation to the relevant subject covering the following:

- What you did
- Why you did this
- What you learnt from this experience.
- The decision making process
- The outcomes achieved
- The impact of your work on the service user.

Reference should be made to the social work theories, legislation, knowledge and values used to inform the practice.

Social Workers who undertake Best Interest Assessments will need to agree to undertake the minimum requirement of Best interest Assessments for Slough Borough Council per year. Please discuss this with your line manager before you apply.

- 2.4** If the criteria in section **2.2** is met, the applicant needs to review the appendices to this guidance and complete the form in **Appendix 5** and email it to their line manager for their approval and commentary.
- 2.5** The line manager then submits it to their Senior Management Team (SMT) or Service Lead and to the Organisational Development (OD) Team via the training@slough.gov.uk inbox so that the budgetary requirements can be considered. The Head of Organisational Development, who holds the centralised training budget, will advise on whether funding is available based upon other service/directorate requirements.
- 2.6** If the application is approved and budget is sourced from the centralised training budget, the OD Team will support the applicant with booking and financial sign-off. The Council's funding for the programme of study will include tuition, registration and examination fees.
- 2.7** Employees who have an approved funding application should ensure that a purchase order is made by contacting the OD Team via training@slough.gov.uk and authorised for the proposed course of study. This will ensure that when the invoice is received by the Council it can be successfully paid.

- 2.8** If the application is for more than one year's training, the applicant will need to complete each year successfully before securing the next year's funding, subject to training budget resources (agreed at the end of each financial year). The OD Team and the applicant's Service Lead should ensure that the applicant is fully informed in advance of the level of funding and support that will be given.
- 2.9** If required employees will be released from their normal working hours to undertake the academic study. However, learning may be in the form of evening studies, open/distance learning, e-learning or a combination of these options.
- 2.10** The Service Lead and the applicant's line manager will determine which method of study is the most suitable, having considered fully the impact on the business, the employee's job role and the requirements of the identified course of study.
- 2.11** If essential text books (hard copy or electronic) and/or equipment cannot be borrowed funding will include payment of essential books or equipment up to the value of £50 for each year of study. Financial assistance will **not** be given to purchase books for general background reading.
- 2.12** The cost of any compulsory residential element to an approved course of study will be paid at the discretion of the Service Lead and in agreement with the Head of Organisational Development. Paid leave will be granted if residence is required during the normal working week and these costs will be met by the Service employing the applicant.
- 2.13** Paid Leave will be provided for examination time relating to the programme of study on proof of the examination dates.
- 2.14** Additional paid study leave up to a maximum of 5 working days for revision or project work will be at the discretion of the Service Lead/Director, but must be in agreement with the Organisational Development Team and be consistent with SBC's Leave Policy.
- 2.15** Travel costs incurred to and from the place of study (and any compulsory residential where appropriate), and which are in excess of the normal cost of travel between home and work, will be paid by the service employing the staff member in accordance with the Council's financial procedures on travel expenses. These should be claimed by submitting the mileage and expenses claim via Agresso
- 2.16** The payment of any additional expenses which are deemed an essential element of the approved programme of study may be agreed by the Service Lead. For additional guidance they should contact the OD Team.
- 2.17** Subsistence expenses incurred in relation to the course of study and costs relating to the typing and binding of project work/dissertation, if relevant, **are not** reclaimable.
- 2.18** Applicants should claim for agreed eligible additional expenses via Agresso. Line Managers will authorise all claims and arrange for payment using Agresso quoting the team cost centre.

3: Steps to completing a funding application for a non-qualification learning event (i.e. learning event that is not accredited i.e conference/seminar/workshop) of half a day or more duration

- 3.1** Any application must be clearly linked to a recognised performance and/or job requirement and featured in an applicant's current Personal Development Plan within their Annual Performance Review Form, which has been signed by their line manager. For details on the performance review process, please go to this SBCInsite link: <http://insite/people/your-development/performance-review/>
- 3.2** Employees wishing to apply for consideration to attend/participate in a non-qualified learning event in accordance with this guidance should meet all of the criteria below:
- The employee is permanent and has successfully completed their probation period.
 - The line manager or Head of Service may support attendance at non qualifying learning events to temporary staff if it is deemed essential to their work with Slough Borough Council.
 - The employee's line manager needs to demonstrate fairness in the application process within their Service.
 - The course is identified within their Personal Development Plan within the Performance Review process.
 - The employee has read and agreed to adhere to the SBC Learning and Development Policy (via this link: <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/>)
 - The employee can demonstrate that their attendance/participation at the learning event will assist them in achieving one or more of their Service/Council objectives.
- 3.3** If the criteria in **3.2** is met, the applicant needs to review the appendices to this guidance and complete the form in **Appendix 6** and email it to their line manager for their approval and commentary.
- 3.4** The line manager then submits it to their Service Lead and to the Organisational Development (OD) Team via the training@slough.gov.uk inbox so that the budgetary requirements can be considered. The Head of Organisational Development, who holds the centralised training budget, will advise on whether funding is available based upon other service/directorate requirements.
- 3.5** If the application is approved and budget is sourced from the centralised training budget, the OD Team will support the applicant with booking and financial sign-off.
- 3.6** Employees who have an approved funding application should ensure that a purchase order is made by contacting the OD Team via training@slough.gov.uk and authorised for the proposed learning event. This will ensure that when the invoice is received by the Council it can be successfully paid.
- 3.7** The Service Lead will determine with the applicant the form of feedback to the Service/Directorate/Organisation so that learning can be shared from the event. The applicant will also notify the OD Team of their attendance and their evaluation of its effectiveness/impact on their learning.

- 3.8** Travel costs incurred to and from the learning event and which are in excess of the normal cost of travel between home and work, will be paid by the service employing the staff member in accordance with the Council's financial procedures on travel expenses. These should be claimed by submitting the mileage and expenses claim via Agresso
- 3.9** Subsistence expenses incurred in relation to the learning event **are not** reclaimable.
- 3.10** Applicants should claim for agreed eligible additional expenses via Agresso. Line Managers will authorise all claims and arrange for payment using Agresso quoting the team cost centre.

4. Review during study for a course/qualification

- 4.1** At the end of each term of study or on a quarterly basis, employees must produce either of the following documentary evidence to their line manager:
- A formal report confirming satisfactory progress and attendance from the provider of the programme of study or course Director.
 - A certificate of success.
- 4.2** Approval of ongoing financial support for the course/qualification will be conditional upon the provision of the above mentioned documentation and satisfactory quarterly formal reviews of progress made. It is advised that the line manager and the employee also discuss progress at their 1:1s review/supervision meetings.
- 4.3** If satisfactory progress on the course is not being met, the line manager should seek advice from the OD Team.
- 4.4** All employees will be required to sign an Information Exchange Agreement (see **Appendix 4**) between them, Slough Borough Council and the Higher Education Institute (HEI). Under this agreement the HEI and OD Team will exchange relevant updates of the student's progress, attendance and disciplinary issues throughout the course of study. The agreement is part of the Learning Agreement (Appendix 2).

5. Unsuccessful Completion of Study

- 5.1** Continued funding and support is dependent upon a satisfactory record of results achieved, attendance record and progress. The OD team in conjunction with the Service lead/Director will be responsible for determining satisfactory performance.
- 5.2** The repayment of all funding to Slough Borough Council by the employee will be required in the following circumstances:-
- The employee fails to sit for an examination
 - The employee fails to show satisfactory progress
 - The employee discontinues a course without due reason
 - The employee fails to 're-sit' examination or repetition of the year

- 5.3 This repayment will not include the repayment of notional tuition fees, in the cases of courses delivered by Slough Borough Council or a Slough Borough Council partner.
- 5.4 Re-sitting an examination or repeating the year of study may only be approved if the Service Lead/Director is fully satisfied that the employee is committed to achieving success on the next occasion. Repeat re-sitting or repetition of a year of study is not permissible under the scheme and as such could result in the funding being repaid to the Council by the employee.
- 5.5 The cost of a re-sit must be covered by the employee.

6. Leaving Slough Borough Council during the Period of Study

- 6.1 If an employee leaves the employment of the Council, or is dismissed other than redundancy or ill-health retirement during the period of study they will be required to repay, in full, all of the direct expenditure incurred by the Council. This will be reclaimed by deduction from salary and any balance outstanding after such deductions will be reclaimed separately.

7. Leaving Slough Borough Council after Completion of the Period of Study

- 7.1 It would normally be expected that the employee remains with the Council for a minimum period of **one calendar year** following completion of the programme of study. Completion will be deemed as either the date of the final examination or, if no formal examinations are held, the date of completion of the programme of study. The HEI must provide the completion date.
- 7.2 In the event that an employee either voluntarily leaves the Council or is dismissed for reasons of conduct during the **one calendar year** after they have completed their programme of study. Completion will be deemed as either the date or the final examination or, if no formal qualifications are held, the date of the completion of the programme of study. The HEI must provide the completion date.
- 7.3 The repayment will be made by deduction from salary, and any amounts still outstanding will be claimed separately.

8. Maintenance of Learning Records

- 8.1 The OD Team and the Line Manager will be responsible for maintaining accurate records of applications and associated administration related to this guidance. In addition a copy of all correspondence should be retained on the Cornerstone Talent Management System or Agresso.
- 8.2 Employees are responsible for maintaining an up-to-date record of their progress on their Personal Development Plans in conjunction with their Line Managers.

9. New Employees Who Wish to Continue with their Studies

- 9.1** A new employee joining Slough Borough Council may be part way through studying a course that is relevant to their new position at Slough Borough Council. If this is the case, the Service Lead/Director can authorise funding and support with prior consultation with the OD Team.

10. Other Conditions & Further Enquiries

- 10.1** Slough Borough Council reserves the right to review this guidance at any time.
- 10.2** Slough Borough Council's commitment to funding and supporting professional academic study should not be regarded by employees as an automatic right or entitlement to funding. Neither does it imply any condition of service. Moreover, employees should note that success in a course of study will not automatically lead to an increase in salary, a promotion or transfer within the Council
- 10.3** For queries in respect of this guidance, please contact the OD Team on 01753 875618 or via training@slough.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Management Steps to seek Approval of Funding and Supporting of Employees to Attain Professional Academic Qualifications

1. Manager publishes availability of funded programmes to all employees within their team/service area and provides them with a copy of the relevant guidance

2. Manager/Employee agree learning and development needs through the Annual Performance Review/1-1s

3. Manager considers applications in accordance with guidance and Learning and Development Policy

4. Where multiple applications are received Managers will need to convene a panel to consider selection

5. Employees who have funding approved will be notified in writing and requested to sign the relevant documents: the Learning Agreement (Appendix 2); the agreement to repay costs (Appendix 3), and the Information Exchange Agreement (Appendix 4).

Copies of these documents and the original application form should be sent to the OD Team via training@slough.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2

LEARNING AGREEMENT FORM

This offer of financial assistance is conditional upon you completing the course and remaining in our employment for the duration of the relevant course and for a minimum of **one calendar year** beyond completion of the course. Should you leave the Council voluntarily, or if dismissed for reasons of conduct during that period the costs incurred by the Council will be repayable by you in full or in part as set out in the guidance and in the Agreement to repay the costs of supported training (**Appendix 3**) which forms a part of your terms and conditions of employment with the Council.

Please sign and date both copies of the Agreement to repay the costs of supported training (**Appendix 3**) and the Information Exchange Agreement (**Appendix 4**) where indicated and return one copy of each of these documents to the Organisational Development Team, People Services, Slough Borough Council, Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2EJ

Slough Borough Council has agreed to sponsor:

Name

Job Title

Department

On the following course of study:

Course:

Stage:

For the agreed funds of £.....

All invoices for course fees, records of attendance, progress reports and examinations should be forwarded directly to your Line Manager, or to the Organisational Development Team, People Services, Slough Borough Council, 25 Windsor Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2EJ if they are financially sponsoring the programme of study.

.....

APPENDIX 3

Agreement to repay to Slough Borough Council the costs of supported training

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the conditions of assistance as set out below and in the Academic Programme Policy.

Employee	Employer
Name	Slough Borough Council
Address	25 Windsor Road,
	Berkshire
	SL1 2EJ

I,(name) agree to the deduction from my salary of £..... being the total cost incurred by Slough Borough Council to fund my course of study and associated examinations for(name of course) At..... (name of college) in the event that during the course of study and for the **one calendar year's** service after completing the course I either:

voluntarily leave the Council or I am dismissed for reasons of conduct;
fail to sit for an examination;
fail to show satisfactory progress;
discontinue the course;
or fail to re-sit an examination or repetition of the year if required to do so;

and furthermore, if I voluntarily leave my employment, or if I am dismissed for reasons of conduct, after the first 3 months following the date of completion and before the completion of **one calendar year's** service after completing the course, I agree to the deduction from my salary of £.....being the total cost incurred by Slough Borough Council to fund my course of study and associated examinations, reducing by one twelfth for each complete calendar month of service over 12 months following the completion of the course.

I also agree to repay to Slough Borough Council before leaving employment any balance remaining outstanding if the above amounts exceed the monies available to deduct from my salary.

I understand and agree to the above change to my terms and conditions of employment with effect from (date)

Signed by employee

Signed on behalf of Employer

Signature:

Signature:

Printed Name:

Printed Name:

Date:

Date:

APPENDIX 4

Information Exchange Agreement

Slough Borough Council sponsoring employees on a Professional Qualifications Programme or other funded programmes would like to receive information about an employee’s progress whilst studying at University/College/other training providers. Similarly, University or College staff would like to know about any employment based issues likely to impact on an employee’s professional or academic performance.

This information exchange is so that both parties – Slough Borough Council and University or College – can offer employees appropriate support to successfully complete their Professional Qualification.

Employees who are subject to any professional standards through a regulatory body the University and Slough Borough Council are obliged to inform the relevant regulator of any change in circumstances that call into question the employees suitability for professional registration. Such a change in circumstances would be a serious matter, where behaviour that falls into the category where the University or Slough Borough Council would be considering termination of training or employment. Employees also have an obligation to inform the relevant regulator for their profession of changes (as student or employee) to their disciplinary record, changes in health, and changes to an existing criminal record or if they acquire a criminal record.

**AGREEMENT ON INFORMATION EXCHANGE BETWEEN SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL,
UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE/TRAINING PROVIDER AND EMPLOYEE**

Relevant information about the student-employee will be exchanged between Slough Borough Council and Relevant information includes: identifying data such as name, programme details, module information, attendance record at the University/College and Placement agencies, Progress reports and all assessments including Course results, disciplinary activity, both employment and university based; and any criminal, health or disability issues likely to have an impact on the student’s professional or academic performance. Slough Borough Council is registered under the GDPR 2016 and Freedom of Information. Information regarding this can be found on the Slough Borough Council website.

Student’s name:

Signature:

Date:
.....

Line Manager’s name:

Signature:

Date:
.....

HEI/Training provider representative:

Signature:

Date:

Head of Organisational Development (budget holder) name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 5: Application Form for funding for qualifying training

This form is to be used for permanent employees in Slough Borough Council who wish to apply for support with accredited/qualifying training. **Scan and send your completed application to: The Organisational Development Team via training@slough.gov.uk**

SECTION A: Personal Details

First Name:	Surname:	
Email:	Telephone:	
Job Title	Permanent Employment start date:	
For Social Workers/Occupational Therapists only, number of years post qualifying		Have you passed your ASYE? (Social workers only)
Manager Name:	Manager Email:	
Team & Directorate:	Manager telephone Number:	

SECTION B COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title	
Name of Provider	
Length of course : Weeks, months, years	
What stage of the course are you applying for? E.g. Year 1, 2, etc	
Course Dates (Include start and end dates by year if applicable)	
Course Fees (please state total per year)	
Total course fees (if more than one year)	
Any additional fees e.g. professional membership, accreditation etc	
Number of days per week/month attendance required?	

SECTION C Supporting statement and application

1. How will this course meet the objectives outlined in your personal development plan? (maximum 150 words)

2. The reason you are applying for this course and how you meet the criteria for the course, and that you have the ability to successfully complete the course. (maximum 150 words)

3. How does this course assist your service or Slough Borough Council in achieving one or more of its business objectives? (maximum 150 words)

4. What action will you need to take to ensure you have the capacity to undertake these additional tasks involved in this programme of study, for example workload management, study time, are you are on a rota that will be impacted? (maximum 150 words)

5. How will you embed your learning when you complete the course? For example, are there additional responsibilities you will undertake that this qualification will enable you to do? (maximum 150 words)

Section C: Statement of recommendation from the Line Manager

Please provide comments on this application. Are you satisfied that they have met the criteria as outlined in the Learning and Development Policy and the course criteria? How will you support the applicant during this programme of study?

Section D: Service Lead recommendations

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SECTION E: CONFIRMATION AND SIGNATURES

Applicant to confirm : I have read the Learning and Development policy and guidance on applications for funding for qualifications and fully understand them

YES/NO

Applicant to confirm : I am prepared to sign a Learning Agreement and to commit to staying with SBC for up to **one calendar year** post completion of the course or willing to have course fees deducted from my final salary if I leave earlier or am dismissed?

YES/NO

Applicant's Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Line Manager's Signature

Print Name:

Date:

Service Lead's/Director's Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Appendix 6: Application Form for the Funding of an external course/conference (non-qualifying)

This form is to be used for employees in Slough Borough Council who wish to apply for funding to attend an external course/conference/seminar (non qualifying).

Before completing this form, you should consult with the budget holder to see if there is funding in the training budget, as well as discuss the application with your line manager.

First Name:		Surname:	
Job Title:		Line Manager:	
Team & Directorate:			
Workplace address:			
Telephone Number		Email:	

Course Title:	
Name and address of Course Provider:	
Cost of course/conference/seminar	Course Dates (include start and end dates):
Total costs:	Course Duration:

1. Describe how this course is relevant to your current role (maximum 150 words)
2. Describe how you will embed the learning from this course/event/seminar? (maximum 150 words)

3. Explain how this meets your learning objectives from your PDP? (maximum 150 words)

4. How will you feed the information back from this course to your Service/Directorate/Organisation and when? (maximum 150 words)

5. Line Manager's Comments:
Please confirm that the need for this course has been identified within the applicant's Personal Development Plan within their Performance Review. Have you applied a fair process for supporting your employee with this course?

6. Service Lead/Director's Comments:
Please confirm your approval or non-approval of this application in the light of both the applicant's and Line Manager's comments

7. Terms and Conditions
By signing this form you agree to the following terms and conditions in addition to those of the course provider:

**You agree to attend the course on time.
You agree to provide feedback as specified above to Slough Borough Council.
Failure to attend may result in the course organiser still charging cancellation fees which will be taken from your Service's budget.
You must confirm attendance to the Organisational Development Team and your line manager.**

Applicant's signature: (Print name):	Date:
Line Manager's signature: (Print name):	Date:
Service Lead/Director's signature: (Print name):	Date: