

## Bursary and Financial Policy

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## **Section 1: Overview**

### **1.1 Purpose and scope**

- 1.1.1** The Frontline Programme is committed to assisting Participants throughout their studies including financially. The Department for Education provides a bursary to qualifying Participants. Payment of the funds is subject to the Department for Education continuing its funding of the Frontline Programme.
  - 1.1.2** The bursary is not a salary and does not include benefits. Participants are student trainees for the duration of Year 1 of the Programme and at no time during Year 1 of the Programme should a Participant hold himself or herself out as being an officer, employee or worker of the local authority or of Frontline.
  - 1.1.3** Participants receive the bursary to contribute to living and travel costs associated with completing the first year of the Frontline Programme. This includes travel to and from Recall Days and other requirements that are part of completion of the Frontline Programme in Year 1.
  - 1.1.4** No bursary is paid in Year 2 of the Frontline Programme when Participants are employees of the local authority and are paid a Newly Qualified Social Worker salary.
  - 1.1.5** Participants are not required to pay tuition fees to complete the Master's Degree in the course of the two-year Frontline Programme. Frontline covers all costs associated with tuition fees for the duration of the Programme.
  - 1.1.6** For this academic year (due to the Summer Institute taking place online), Frontline has offered a Summer Institute bursary to all participants in place of the accommodation and food subsidy that would normally be provided to participants at the residential Summer Institute. The Summer Institute bursary covers the period of Monday 13 July to Monday 31 August and is paid at the same rate as the year one bursary. Accommodation and food is only covered for Participants themselves and not for family members or spouses. This will be paid to Participants in two
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instalments. For further information on the Summer Institute bursary please refer to previous communications from Frontline.

- 1.1.7 In Year 1 participants are permitted up to 25 days' holiday as approved by their Consultant Social Worker. These 25 days are not paid and are not a benefit of the bursary. You will not receive payment for any days of holiday not used.

## **1.2 Responsibilities**

- 1.2.1 This policy is owned by the Director of Finance and Compliance who is responsible for its implementation.
- 1.2.2 Frontline's Finance Team, Programme Management Team and Delivery Team are responsible for enacting the procedures outlined within the policy.
- 1.2.3 It is applicants' and Participants' responsibility to provide their bank details to Frontline for the purpose of the bursary payment, and to ensure these details remain up to date.
- 1.2.4 Applicants and Participants should familiarise themselves with the following policy so that they are familiar with the terms set out below.

## **Section 2: Policy and procedures**

### **2.1 Additional financial support while on the Programme**

- 2.1.1 The bursary is intended to contribute towards living and travel costs for the first year of the Frontline Programme during which Participants are training for qualification as social workers.
  - 2.1.2 Frontline recognises that additional financial assistance may be required to support individuals to complete the Summer Institute, and the Frontline Bursary Advance and Grant Scheme is intended to support Participants to cover expenses during this specific and distinct period. Details about the Bursary Advance and Grant Scheme will be provided to all Participants prior to the Summer Institute.
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**2.1.3** Participants during Year 1 of the programme, once they are fully registered with Lancaster University, are also eligible to apply for two of Lancaster University's support funds: [Lancaster's Opportunity and Access Fund](#) (LOAF), and the [emergency loan](#). Participants should ensure that prior to submitting an application for extra financial support they read the supporting terms and conditions for each support option.

**2.1.4** Participants are encouraged to contact Frontline if they are experiencing difficulties that arise from financial considerations. Advice and guidance is available to all Participants from Frontline; there may be additional support or advisory services available from the local authority, but Frontline cannot guarantee any such provision.

**2.1.5** As students of Lancaster University (LU), Frontline participants will also have access to LU's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), where they are able to get debt management support and a legal information team who provide Citizens Advice Bureau type information. Access to this support is available through Moodle.

## **2.2 Terms of payment and repayment**

**2.2.1** The bursary, which is paid in monthly instalments, commences from the 1<sup>st</sup> September onwards and is normally paid on the 1<sup>st</sup> working day of each month. If that day is a weekend or a bank holiday, you will receive the payment on the next working day.

**2.2.2** To receive the bursary, Participants must:

- a) have fully registered with Lancaster University;
  - b) remain enrolled and be actively participating in the Frontline Programme;
  - c) submit all assignments and ensure attendance and engagement meets programme requirements in line with Frontline's policies and procedures
  - d) abide by the procedures and regulations of Frontline and of the local authority as applicable;
  - e) provide Frontline with any evidence relating to their health, character and criminal convictions as reasonably requested by Frontline.
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If a participant stops attending all taught and practice-based elements of the programme with no explanation provided, then Frontline reserves the right to discontinue and revoke the bursary, as per 2.3.4 of the Attendance and Engagement policy.

**2.2.3** During Year 1 when a participant's maternity, paternity or adoption leave is for an extended duration which prevents/prohibits their ability to complete the programme requirements within the academic year that they joined, the bursary payments will cease upon the commencement of the leave. If the participant returns to the programme, in the next available academic year, the bursary payments will recommence in accordance to the policy.

## **2.3 Bursary amount**

**2.3.1** The Frontline bursary is £18,000 or £20,000 for 2020/21 depending on the allocated region. The bursary amount is subject to change each year and is dependent on funding being made available to Frontline from the Department for Education. Frontline will advise Participants each year of the amount of the bursary for that year. Frontline uses the London Councils website to guide decisions on London weighting. These amounts are subject to change each year.

**2.3.2** Participants based in London will receive London weighting. For 2020/21 these weightings will affect the bursary as below:

- a) Participants based in London local authorities will be paid a total bursary of £20,000
- b) Participants based outside of London local authorities will be paid a total bursary of £18,000.

**2.3.3** If for any reason a Participant moves local authority, their bursary may be subject to change to reflect the appropriate amount for the new local authority location.

## **2.4 Mode of payment**

**2.4.1** Frontline disburses the bursary in monthly instalments.

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- 2.4.2 Frontline will pay the bursary to Participants directly into their bank accounts.
- 2.4.3 It is the Participants' responsibility to provide their bank details to Frontline for the purposes of bursary payment, and to ensure these details remain up to date.
- 2.4.4 It is Frontline's responsibility to ensure the bursary is disbursed in a timely manner to Participants.
- 2.4.5 The bursary is paid in 12 equal monthly instalments, in advance, over the course of Year 1 of the Programme.

## **2.5 Taxation**

- 2.5.1 Frontline understand that the bursary is not considered earnings by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). As such the bursary is not subject to income tax or National Insurance contributions.
- 2.5.2 However, Applicants and Participants should be aware that this is open to review by HMRC and could change. Frontline aims to keep Participants updated and to clearly communicate the implications of any changes.
- 2.5.3 Participants must take responsibility for their own tax affairs.

## **2.6 Student loan**

- 2.6.1 The bursary does not count as income that is subject to student loan repayments; however, Participants who have a student loan are responsible for contacting the Student Loans Company if required to complete a form evidencing current means of support.

## **2.7 Bursary status during Intercalation, Deferral, Suspension and Extension**

## **Intercalations and Extensions**

- 2.7.1** The total period for which the bursary is payable to any Participant is 12 months (constituting Year 1 of the Programme).
- 2.7.2** It is the Participants' responsibility to ensure they are able to meet their financial commitments during any extension or similar period.
- 2.7.3** Participants who intercalate their Practice Learning Experience due to illness or other personal circumstances are not eligible to receive the bursary during the period of intercalation. Bursary payments are only reinstated once the Participant recommences their Practice Learning Experience.
- 2.7.4** Participants should be aware that if they fail to meet and complete the Year 1 programme requirements following 12 months in the practice learning setting, and an extension of the Practice Learning Experience is required, they will not receive extra bursary funding to cover the period of extension.

## **Deferral**

- 2.7.5** If an applicant defers prior to commencing Year 1 and re-joins the Programme the following year with the subsequent cohort, they are treated as any other Participant on the Programme and receive pro-rata bursary payments under the same terms as any other Year 1 Participant in the same local authority. If an applicant is granted a deferral prior to commencing Year 1, they are not eligible to receive the bursary during their period of deferral.

## **Suspension**

- 2.7.6** Participants who are suspended pending an investigation under one of our policies remain eligible to receive a bursary from the first day of their suspension until the
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matter has been concluded. The final decision on the continued payment of the bursary will depend on the outcome of the investigation.

### **Section 3: Relevant references**

#### **3.1 Frontline policies and documents**

**3.1.1** This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and other documents:

- Attendance and Engagement policy
  - Intercalation, Transfer and Withdrawal
  - The Participant's Practice Learning Agreement
  - Participant Discipline Policy
  - Fitness to Practise Policy
  - Fitness to Study Policy
  - Recruitment and Admissions Policy
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