Learner Support Programme

Appendix to the Discretionary Funding Guidance and Requirements 2008/09 covering additional funding for ESOL provision
1. **Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this appendix is to provide information to those receiving allocations of the additional discretionary Support Funding (dSF) from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for the purposes of supporting ESOL learners only.

1.2 This Appendix must be read in conjunction with the main Discretionary Funding Guidance and Requirements 2008/09. This sets out the requirements and the actions that will need to be taken into account for the application of each scheme and sets out the eligibility criteria and the priorities for disbursing the funding. It explains the process for allocations and describes how the LSC will collect monitoring information and audit the schemes. This guidance can be found at: [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-fundingguidancerequirements200809-may08.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-fundingguidancerequirements200809-may08.pdf)

2. **Background**

2.1 ESOL funding policy changes were introduced in 2007/08 and initially set out in the LSC’s *Annual Statement of Priorities 2007/08*, published in October 2006. As a result of the following Race Equality Impact Assessment a separate allocation of £4.6 million was made available in 2007/08 for learners who would be unintentionally disadvantaged as a result of the funding policy changes.

2.2 On 30 October 2008, DIUS instructed the LSC to continue this additional funding of £4.6 million for a further year.

3. **Allocations**

3.1 This additional funding will be distributed to LSC regions on the basis of ESOL enrolments from the 2006/07 ILR data. This method of allocation is in recognition of the regional variance in ESOL provision. Within regions allocations will be made through local partnership teams to individual institutions in order that they can support ESOL learners.

3.2 **In contrast to the standard dSF the additional £4.6 million funding can only be used to support ESOL course fees and ESOL exam fees. Other support costs cannot be met from this funding, for example, childcare or travel costs.**

3.3 This additional funding should be prioritised towards the two groups identified in the Race Equality Impact Assessment that were deemed to be most at risk of disadvantage: these were i) spouses, particularly in the settled communities, that are unable to evidence their entitlement to full fee remission, or are unable to make a financial contribution to their fee costs; and ii) low paid workers who are unable to demonstrate receipt of an income based benefit.

3.4 In line with standard dSF guidance all providers receiving allocations of discretionary support funding must have a set of written criteria describing how they will prioritise and disburse the funding, and which should be available if required by LSC.
3.5 In line with standard dSF guidance providers may use up to 5% of their total funding allocation towards administrative costs. Where it has been agreed that a large provider will administer the funding for other providers, the former will also be able to use up to 5% of the latter’s total funds for administration.

4. **Learner Eligibility**

4.1 The residency eligibility criteria for this discretionary funding remains the same as for standard dSF.

4.2 Learners must be aged 19 and above to receive this additional support. Learners under 19 are eligible for fully funded ESOL provision.

5. **Financial and Data Monitoring**

5.1 In line with standard dSF guidance providers must have administrative procedures that:

- □ record the details of learner applications for financial assistance (including the financial value of applications as well as the number of awards)
- □ account for the discretionary funds distributed;
- □ identify unspent funds at the end of the academic year.

5.2 Providers must also submit information detailing how discretionary funds have been used. The data is used to demonstrate the efficacy of discretionary support and to demonstrate probity in the use of public funds. The data is collated in two ways:

- □ completion of mandatory field of the Individualised Learner Record (using 01 (19+ hardship - fees) in field L49);
- □ financial reconciliation, completion of a monitoring form (which will be issued as part of standard dSF monitoring forms).

5.3 For audit purposes, hard copies of all documentation for learner support should be kept for a period of at least six years.