EAST SCITT

DEVELOPING TEACHERS OF THE FUTURE

Hardship policy

Approved by: Strategic committee	**Date:** 03/12/2024
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Next review due by:	

EAST SCITT Hardship Fund Policy

1. Purpose

The EAST SCITT Hardship Fund is designed to provide short-term financial assistance to current tuition-fee trainees facing unforeseen financial difficulties that affect their ability to continue with their studies. This fund aims to support trainees in maintaining their attendance and engagement with the course during periods of financial hardship. The maximum award is **£500**. The fund may cover essential costs such as travel and food expenses, but it cannot be used to pay course fees.

2. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for assistance from the EAST SCITT Hardship Fund, applicants must demonstrate the financial difficulty is unforeseen and preventing applicants from meeting general living costs which impact on training.

a) Confirmed Financial Hardship

Applicants must provide evidence that they are experiencing financial difficulty due to **exceptional or unforeseen life events or circumstances** occurring since commencing the course: Situations such as illness, bereavement, or family emergencies that affect daily living expenses (e.g. food, household bills, childcare, travel costs).

Note: Exceptional life events must directly impact the applicant's ability to meet essential living costs. Evidence required will depend on the nature of the circumstances around the hardship fund request.

b) Trainee Status

Applicants must:

a. Be registered as a tuition-fee trainee with EAST SCITT for the academic year in which they are applying for financial assistance.

b. Have attended the course for at least **two calendar months** and have at least **one calendar month remaining** before the planned end of the course.

c. Have good attendance at the time the application is made.

c) Efforts to Secure Alternative Support

Applicants must have already accessed any available financial support through:

a. **Student Finance England (SFE)** or the **Student Loans Company (SLC)** (if applicable), including loans or grants.

d) Commitment to the Programme

Applicants must:

a. Adhere to the **EAST SCITT Code of Conduct**.

b. Maintain good attendance and engagement with their studies.

c. Demonstrate that without financial assistance, they are at **real risk of withdrawing** from the course due to financial difficulties.

3. Unacceptable Uses of the Hardship Fund

The Hardship Fund **cannot** be used for:

- Tuition fees.
- Non-essential expenses, such as leisure activities, non-essential travel, or luxury goods.
- Debts unrelated to essential living or study-related costs (e.g. credit card debt, non-study-related loans).

4. Application Process

a) **How to Apply**:

- Applicants must complete the **Hardship Fund Application Form** (Appendix A) and email it to the **Director of EAST SCITT**.
- In the application, applicants must clearly explain their financial need and provide the required documentation, including:
  - **Student Finance England Assessment Letter** confirming household income.
  - **Student Loans Company Confirmation** of support for fees and living costs.
  - Supporting evidence including 3 months of bank statements for all accounts held in the trainee's name.
  - Details of all income streams and all outgoings.
  - Details of financial help being accessed and attempted to access.
  - If applications are related to an unforeseen cost, quotes and/or receipts for the costs incurred are required.
  - Any additional supporting documents or evidence requested by the Hardship Fund Committee.

b) **Processing Applications**:

- After submission, applicants will be invited to discuss their application with the **SCITT Director** to clarify details or answer questions.
- The application forwarded by the central team to the **Hardship Fund Committee** with supporting documentation relating to attendance and engagement with studies. The **Hardship Fund Committee** consists of members of the **EAST SCITT Strategic committee**.

c) **Decision and Notification**:

- Applicants will be notified of the outcome within **14 working days** from submission of the complete application.
- The decision of the **Hardship Fund Committee** is **final**, and the outcome will be communicated via email.

5. Allocation of Funds

a) **Discretionary Fund Allocation**:

- The amount awarded from the Hardship Fund is **discretionary** and based on individual circumstances.
- The maximum amount available per claim is **£500**.
- Only one claim can be made per person.

b) **Payment Process**:

- The committee may approve a **lump sum** or **series of payments** depending on the applicant's specific needs.
- Funds will be paid directly to the applicant's **bank account** via **BACS** transfer.
- The SCITT Director reserves the right to reject applications based on funds available.

6. Misuse of the Hardship Fund

- If there is evidence that an award from the Hardship Fund has been used for purposes other than those outlined in this policy (e.g., for non-essential expenses or tuition fees), the allocation will be **revoked**. In such cases, the trainee may be required to **repay** the funds.
- Repeated misuse of the Hardship Fund will result in **disqualification** from future funding, and the trainee may be subject to disciplinary action as per the EAST SCITT Code of Conduct.

7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- All information provided in the application process will be treated as **confidential**.
- Information will only be shared with individuals directly involved in the assessment and administration of the Hardship Fund.
- All applications and supporting documentation will be handled in accordance with **EAST SCITT's GDPR and Data Protection** policies.

8. Monitoring and Review

- EAST SCITT will conduct periodic reviews of the Hardship Fund to ensure that it is meeting its objectives and operating in a fair and transparent manner. Full financial reporting will be submitted to the trust.
- Feedback from trainees may be sought to help improve the application process and fund administration.

9. Contact Information

For any questions or assistance with the application process, trainees can contact the **Director of EAST SCITT** at kerensacarrick@eastscitt.co.uk.

Appendix A

EAST SCITT Hardship Fund Application Form

Please read the EAST SCITT Hardship Fund Policy before completing this form. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

Section 1: Personal Information

Full Name: _____

Date of Birth: ___ / ___ / _____

Address: _____

_____

Contact Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Section 2: Course Information

SCITT Registration Number (if applicable): _____

Course Title: _____

Date Course Commenced: ___ / ___ / _____

Expected Course End Date: ___ / ___ / _____

Attendance record to date (to be confirmed by EAST SCITT):

☐ Good ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Unsatisfactory

Section 3: Financial Circumstances

3a. Reason for Application

Please describe the circumstances leading to your financial hardship:

_____

_____

3b. Impact on Studies

Explain how your financial difficulties are affecting your ability to continue your course:

_____

_____

3c. Support Accessed

Please list any financial assistance you have already accessed or attempted to access:

_____

Section 4: Financial Information

Household income (from Student Finance England Assessment Letter): £_____

Current Student Finance/SLC support: £_____

Other income streams (employment, benefits, etc.): £_____ per month

Total monthly outgoings (rent, utilities, food, childcare, etc.): £_____

Please attach:

☐ Student Finance England Assessment Letter

☐ Student Loans Company confirmation of support

☐ 3 months of bank statements (all accounts)

☐ Details of all income and outgoings

☐ Evidence of financial help accessed/attempted

☐ Quotes/receipts for unforeseen costs (if applicable)

☐ Any additional supporting documentation requested

Section 5: Amount Requested

Amount of funding requested: £_____ (maximum £500)

Purpose of funding (e.g., travel costs, food, childcare, essential bills):

Section 6: Declaration

I confirm that the information provided in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that:

- Providing false information may result in the rejection of my application and possible disciplinary action.

- Any award must only be used for the purposes outlined in the EAST SCITT Hardship Fund Policy.

- Misuse of funds may result in repayment being required and exclusion from future applications.

Signed: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / _____

Section 7: For Office Use Only

Application received on: ___ / ___ / _____

Reviewed by SCITT Director: _____

Supporting documents checked: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Attendance & engagement confirmed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Decision by Hardship Fund Committee:

☐ Approved ☐ Declined ☐ Further Information Required

Amount awarded: £_____

Payment authorised by: _____

Date of payment: ___ / ___ / _____