



## **Graduate Bursary Autumn 2019**

The Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA) will re-open the Learner Fund Bursary to Early Learning and Care practitioners who are new graduates of a recognised Early Childhood Education and Care degree programme. The local City/County Childcare Committees (CCC) will process and appraise Learner Fund Bursary applications.

### **The following rules apply to the Graduate Bursary:**

1. This qualification for which the bursary is paid must be on the DCYA Early Years Recognised Qualifications list.
2. The award must be placed at level 7/8/9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and achieved in the academic years 2013 - 2019.
3. The bursary amount will be €750.
4. The qualification must be a full, major award; the bursary cannot be paid in respect of partially completed awards.
5. Letters from third level education providers which state that a partially completed award is equivalent to a full award should not be accepted.
6. A letter of eligibility to practice from DCYA which states that the applicant is eligible for work as an ECCE room leader at the higher capitation rate can also be accepted.
7. The qualification for which the bursary is paid must be that which qualifies the person to work in the Early Years sector (and is at least level 7 on the NFQ).
8. Applicants may only apply once and cannot be granted the Learner Fund bursary for a second time if they have already received it before i.e. the bursary will be paid for one of the following - a level 7 OR a level 8 OR a level 9 qualification.
9. The applicant cannot have received any public funding in support of their completing the award relating to this application.
10. The bursary is available to experienced practitioners only; applicants must have been working in a Tusla registered Early Learning & Care Service prior to beginning their course.
11. Applicants must be currently working in a Tusla registered Early Learning & Care Service.
12. Staff working in standalone School Age Childcare services are not eligible to apply.
13. Application must be made by the holder of the award and not by any third party on their behalf.

### **Please Note:**

**With regard to (1) above:** If a person who does not have a qualification on the published list, or a letter of eligibility to practice, applies for a bursary, the CCC should advise them that they cannot accept the application. The person should be advised to apply to DCYA for qualifications recognition by email to (EYQualifications@dcya.gov.ie), not to further an application for the graduate bursary, but on the basis that they are not compliant with the Regulations if they have not ascertained their eligibility to practice in the Early Learning and Care sector. They should also advise that qualifications recognition takes a few weeks for most applicants, and DCYA will not prioritise one application over another on any basis.

**With regard to (5) above:** Only students who have registered for and successfully completed a Level 7 or 8 Major Award are eligible. In some specific cases, students who have registered for a Level 8 Award but successfully completed and exited with a Level 7 Major Award are eligible. This is only possible in 3 colleges as follows: National College of Ireland (Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education), Cork IT (BA in Early Years Education), London Metropolitan University offered through Portobello Institute (BA [Ord] Early Childhood Studies) as they appear on the DCYA published list of qualifications.

**With regard to (7) above:** DCYA is aware that an increasing number of qualified practitioners choose to pursue post-graduate education to further advance their practice, but is not in a position to provide funding in respect of this. If an applicant does not have an eligible undergraduate degree, and has a post-graduate award which is not on the published list, they should apply for qualifications recognition as a priority. The outcome of this may make them eligible for a bursary, or may not, but is unlikely to be concluded in time for the closing dates.

**Sharing of data with relevant parties:** The Department of Children and Youth Affairs is committed to protecting the rights and privacy of individuals in accordance with both European Union and Irish data protection



legislation. See DCYA Privacy Notice:

[www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/aboutus/20180822\\_DCYADataPrivacyNotice.pdf](http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/aboutus/20180822_DCYADataPrivacyNotice.pdf)

**The CCC decision is final:** There is no appeals process for the Graduate Bursary payment. The decision of the CCC is final for the purposes of the bursary application and process, and no delays to the timely conclusion of the process should occur. If an applicant is not approved and wants clarification on this, they can contact DCYA directly.

**Application requirements:**

- I. Application form to be completed in full and by the deadline specified.
- II. Applicants must be currently working in a Tusla registered Early Learning & Care service.
- III. Supporting documentation must be provided with the application form.
- IV. In lieu of graduating certificates, transcripts from the third level education institution can be accepted.
- V. The transcripts must be in document/hard copy form and endorsed by the institution; screenshots of online student records cannot be accepted.
- VI. The transcript can only be accepted if it clearly shows that the full award has been achieved.

**Timeframe for applications:**

Date	Action	Responsible
Week beg. 5th August 2019	Notice of LF bursary application process opening will be published/disseminated by CCCs at local level – CCCs can provide the guide/application form to interested practitioners	CCCs
19 August	Call for applications open by CCCs	CCCs
27 September	Deadline for submission of applications – close at 5 p.m.	CCCs
30 September - 04 October	CCCs undertake review/appraisal of applications / including sign-off by CCCs internal decision making structure	CCCs
07 October	CCCs provide spreadsheet of recommendations /decision to Pobal	CCCs
08 - 09 October	Pobal submit funding drawdown to DCYA for total projected bursary amount	Pobal
08 - 09 October	Pobal undertake high level check of CCC recommendations & collate file for DCYA	Pobal
10 October	Pobal provide file of recommendations to DCYA for review/sign-off	Pobal
18 October	DCYA provide Pobal with the approval/allocation to CCCs	DCYA
25 October	Pobal issue contract addendums for approved allocation to CCCs	Pobal
By 02 November	CCCs sign/return contract addendum	CCCs
By week beg. 11 November	Pobal transfer approved allocation to CCCs	Pobal
Week beg. 18 November	CCCs pay approved applicants	CCCs