

External learning and qualifications - Guiding principles

Camden is committed to supporting the professional development of all its staff. We support professional learning and personal development in a [diversity of ways](#). Whilst internal learning opportunities will meet most needs, we recognise that there are times when access to external learning is required, for example to:

- Complement the learning available internally, enhancing skills and/or knowledge.
- Provide an opportunity to gain appropriate professional qualifications.

If so, we expect staff and managers to follow these guiding principles:

- Be clear on the purpose of the learning.
- External development opportunities are ordinarily available for those who have completed their probation and who are performing well, see [My Performance guidance](#).
- In the first instance utilise experiences, internal resources, courses, and apprenticeships. External learning opportunities should only be considered if the desired outcome is unachievable through the internal routes.
- External learning is to be funded from local budgets. Where resources are limited, ensure that opportunities are offered equitably across the service, and if needed apply a selection process.
- Explore at least 3 provider options for meeting the learning need. Select the best one based on quality of learning, match to your purpose, when and how the learning is delivered, cost, and any other relevant factors.
- Have a discussion around expectations, support, and commitments. This might include timelines, funding, time off for attending classes and study, opportunities in the work, and sharing learning with colleagues. Keep a written record of what is agreed.
- Check and ensure that any retention related training aligns with and complements corporate initiatives; contact hrservices@camden.gov.uk or your HR Business Advisor to check current initiatives.
- Where it is agreed that funding will be paid back if the staff member/student leaves Camden during the course, or for a period after the course is completed, ensure this has been communicated to HR using a Financial Assistance Undertaking form.

For further advice contact learning@camden.gov.uk

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

Financial Assistance Undertaking

In consideration of the support granted to me by London Borough of Camden to enable me to access the learning detailed in Section A of this agreement, I _____ (insert name) hereby:

- 1) Undertake to remain in the service of the Council for a **period of** _____ (insert time period) from the date on which the qualification is obtained/course completed, always provided that there is a post available for me.

If I fail to honour this obligation as a result of my obtaining any other post outside the London Borough of Camden, I agree to repay the financial assistance granted to me on the following basis:

Leave within first quarter of time period reimburse 100% of funding
 Leave within half of time period reimburse 75% of funding
 Leave within three quarter of time period reimburse 50% of funding
 Leave within last quarter of time period reimburse 25% of funding.

- 2) If I leave the employment of Camden Council before completing the course or qualification, to repay in full the financial assistance granted to me; and
- 3) If without good reason I fail to sit for an examination within a reasonable period or to show satisfactory progress in my studies or discontinue my course, to repay the financial assistance granted to me;

I hereby grant to the Director of Finance of the Council an irrevocable authority to deduct any sum which I may owe to the Council in consequence of this undertaking from any salary or other payment due to me and, if any salary or other payment is not sufficient to discharge my debt to the Council, to pay promptly any account rendered to me for the balance of the debt.

Section A			
Course Title			
Qualification (if applicable)			
Start Date		End Date	
Full Name			
Address			
Signature		Date	
Witnessed By			
Full Name			
Address			
Signature		Date	

Please send completed forms to hrservices@camden.gov.uk. Both the employee and manager to keep a copy for their own records.