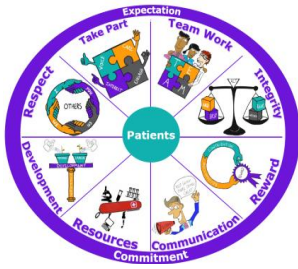


# Scientific Learning & Development Fund

2018



## 1. What is the purpose of the Scientific Learning & Development Fund (SLDF)?

Investment in our people with their scientific learning & development is a Viapath strategic objective and central to providing a compelling employee proposition, it establishes us as an employer of choice for people that want to work, and develop a career in pathology.

Viapath's commitment to growing our people's knowledge and skills will prepare them to be at the forefront of pathology provision and transformation in the UK.

The SLDF is also about equality of opportunity, so that any employee can nominate themselves for training and support through discussion with their manager, irrespective of their location, role or seniority.

## 2. Which kind of courses can be applied for?

Courses must be both scientific and qualification based development and relevant to your current role and level in Viapath.

## 3. What is the purpose of the Scientific Learning & Development Council (SLDC) and who are the members?

The SLDC has been established to provide focus for the strategic area of scientific learning & development. Its terms of reference ensure:

- appropriate investment is made in our people's scientific development
- that all investment is strategically aligned to the current and future needs and opportunities facing the services we deliver
- equality of opportunity and access to all our employees, at all levels and in all locations and services.

Once the window is closed the SLDC review all the applications and their role is to steer the application of funding fairly across Viapath. The Council consists of an Operations Director, a General Manager, HR and Scientific Directors, the Learning and Development Manager and a member of the Future Leaders in Innovation Steering group representing our scientific community.

## 4. How will decisions be made in respect of individual applications for support?

The SLDF stimulates a significant level of response and therefore it is highly unlikely that we will be able to support every application received. The ambition is to create equality of opportunity but the process will be competitive in nature, such that the most compelling cases will be prioritised.

Consideration ***will therefore be given to the quality of the application, the justification provided and the basis upon which the applicant sets out the benefits of the proposed training to themselves and the organisation.*** Each application should be reviewed and approved by the relevant Line Manager and Service Delivery Manager and they will help to ensure that the application is well founded and articulated before its submission for consideration.

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**5. When an application is approved for a course longer than 12 months does the employee need to re-apply every year through this process or does the previous agreement cover this?**

No, there is no need to re-apply. Once the application has been approved all subsequent years will be covered. However, the applicant does need to contact the L&D department in good time before the start of the continuing year so that they can confirm the cost of the continuing year and a Purchase Order can be raised.

A new application is only required for new courses and any course add on, for example a top up from a foundation to a full degree.

If the agreement that has been entered into includes the provision of financial support then the employee must sign the contractual undertaking (Learning Agreement) to complete the programme and to acknowledge that the company funding will be recoverable in certain circumstances e.g. resignation within two years of completion of the programme in question.

**6. If an employee makes an application for support but is unsuccessful, what will happen and what other options will be open to them?**

Unsuccessful applicants will receive a written response from the SLDC. In the case of an application which is approved but needs to be deferred to the next funding period we will contact the individual and discuss the next steps for them.

Wherever possible, unsuccessful applicants will be given guidance, advice and encouragement to pursue an alternative course and/or to reapply or seek alternative sources of funding.

We are determined to maximise the positive impact of this initiative and dealing positively with all applications is important.

**7. If an employee started a course prior to the new application window can funding be backdated?**

No, funding can only be given for courses starting after the application date.

**8. If an employee is on a Fixed Term Contract can they apply for funding?**

Yes, however funding will not be issued unless a permanent contract has been secured.

**9. If an employee is still in probation can they apply for funding?**

No, applicants must have successfully completed the probation period before applying to the SLDF.

**10. If an application is approved, how accessible is 75% of funding?**

When applications are approved, applicants will be notified and issued with a Learning Agreement.

Once in receipt of the signed Learning Agreement a sponsorship letter and a purchase order number will be issued to the applicant. This is for the applicant to provide the learning provider with proof of sponsorship by Viapath and the Purchase Order (PO) number to be invoiced against.

**11. What individual contribution is required for those in MLA, ATO, SATO MTO and Associate Practitioner roles (Band 4 and below equivalent) who wish to apply for funding under £500?**

Applications should be submitted as per the instructions, if the application is successful then the course will be 100% funded and the applicant will not need to pay any contribution.

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**12. If an employee has applied previously can they apply again for another course?**

Yes, however preference will be given to those who are applying for the first time.

**13. Is it possible to get support with my 25% contribution towards the course?**

In exceptional circumstances, Viapath may be able to offer a study loan, please contact: [Viapathtraininganddevelopment@viapath.co.uk](mailto:Viapathtraininganddevelopment@viapath.co.uk) for further details.

**14. How does this initiative relate to the annual Performance, Planning and Review (PPR) process and in particular the Personal Development Plan (PDP) element?**

Individual PPR and PDP discussions will include a thorough review of the employee's short and long term L&D needs. The SLDF ensures that every employee has an additional opportunity to raise the subject, have access to financial support and to secure adequate time to study.

**15. How frequent is the SLDF window?**

During 2018 the window will be open twice for self nomination, once in May and again during October. This will be reviewed on an annual basis in line with the OFP.

**16. If an employee wishes to attend a conference, to present a poster or just to update their knowledge should they pursue this through the SLDF?**

No, this type of learning is dealt with separately. All trips to UK and overseas conferences, seminars and similar events must be approved in advance by a member of the Viapath Group Executive. All such trips must then be coordinated with the Viapath Marketing Manager in order to gain the greatest benefit for the wider business.

In such circumstances the individual should discuss with their Line Manager, or Service Delivery Manager and Clinical Lead and apply utilising the L&D Application Form. You should not apply through the SLDF route.

**17. This is a scientific L&D initiative. Does that mean employees other than scientists cannot receive support for their training and future development?**

This initiative is focused specifically upon the scientific community. People in other functions should discuss their L&D development ambitions with their manager through their Appraisal Process.

***If you have any queries relating to SLDF that are not answered above, please contact:***

[Viapathtraininganddevelopment@viapath.co.uk](mailto:Viapathtraininganddevelopment@viapath.co.uk)

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