

# Competitor Support Fund Guidance Notes

## Introduction

WorldSkills UK recognises the level of commitment that is required from competitors and their organisations throughout the competition journey, from participating in UK-wide national skills competitions to potential involvement in Squad and Team UK.

Our vision is to ensure that young people from all backgrounds can access our life-changing programmes. We aim to widen participation in our programmes and tackle barriers to access faced by young people. To break down some of these barriers we launched our Competitor Support Fund, in partnership with the University Vocational Awards Council. The Fund will help cover essential costs for those who are experiencing financial difficulties, which may prevent them from accessing and participating in our competition-based development programmes. The fund will provide a contribution towards the cost of taking part in our on-site National Qualifiers (national qualifiers that are online or taking place remotely are exempt from this Fund), and the National Finals.

## Eligibility Criteria

There is no automatic entitlement for support. The level of funding provided will depend on individual circumstances and meeting the eligibility criteria. To be eligible for support from the Fund, competitors must meet the following criteria:

- Competitors must be participating in a current WorldSkills UK skills competition
- There must be a demonstrated need for applying for the fund, for example any barriers that may prevent competitors from taking part in competitions
- Competitors must not be receiving financial support from another source for taking part in our competitions
- Competitors must attend and take part in the competition for which they registered to be able to claim support from the Fund
- Competitors must be a student or apprentice at a UK college, University or training provider

## How much will be awarded?

We may be able to help with:

- Travel costs for attending a national qualifier or a national final event (up to a maximum of £75)
- Childcare / other care costs (up to a maximum of £100)
- Backfill costs for employers (for SMEs) (up to a maximum of £100)
- Other areas of support, to be assessed on a case by case basis

The amount of funding available is limited, once the fund allocation has been reached no further applications will be considered. Due to the high volume of applications, please apply early to avoid disappointment.

## How do I apply?

- Ensure you are eligible and that the fund is currently accepting applications
- Complete the online application form
- Applications can be made by an individual (insert EMS link) or, by their organisation on their behalf (insert EMS link)

- Applications can be made for competing at the national qualifier stage and again, upon successfully reaching the national final stage
- Applications can be made once written confirmation has been received of a place at a national qualifier (national qualifiers that are taking place online or remotely are exempt from this Fund)
- A second application for grant funding can be made if a competitor successfully reaches the National Final stage, again written confirmation of securing a place at the Finals must be received before an application can be made
- To ensure all those that are eligible to apply for funding are able to do so, applications can be made up to 4 weeks after the end of the National Qualifier or the National Finals stages.
- The final deadline for applications for support for National Qualifiers is 5pm on 31 July 2023
- The final deadline for applications for support for the National Finals is 5pm on 15 December 2023
- Any claims made outside this period may be rejected
- No application will be approved without supporting evidence
- Supporting evidence can be uploaded on the online application form
- Supporting documents could include quotes or copies of tickets for travel on public transport, quotes or invoices for equipment, a letter from an employer confirming that a competitor has to take time off work to take part in a competition; receipts for childcare costs
- If the supporting documentation is not received within 4 weeks of the date of submission of the online application, the application will be withdrawn.

## Assessment and Award

- All eligible applications will be assessed
- An assessor may contact you by telephone to obtain further information
- All applications are considered by a panel which will meet during the period the fund is open
- The final decision cannot be changed and no discussion will be entered into although we will try to provide feedback if we can
- Following the panel meeting, we will contact you by email to let you know the outcome, we aim to give you a decision within 4 weeks of receiving your application
- If your application is successful, you will be asked to provide evidence of costs that will be or have been incurred for taking part in competition activity, if not submitted at the point of application. This could be quotes or copies of receipts or invoices

## Payments

- If your application is successful, you will be sent an online form to complete your payment details and to provide evidence for the funds you are claiming
- Payments are made by bank transfer. Please ensure you carefully check the bank details you submit, incorrect details will cause payment loss or delay
- Grants awarded do not need to be repaid. However, if a grant has been awarded and subsequently there is no attendance at the competition, we will request that monies are repaid back to us.

*As a publicly funded organisation, WorldSkills UK must meet strict auditing requirements, so no grant can be paid, without a fully completed application form and submission of evidence of costs. If insufficient information is provided or the fund has been fully allocated, WorldSkills UK retains the right to withdraw the grant offer or refuse payment.*

ALL applications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.