

Application Guidance for Foundation, Intermediate and PGCert courses in Systemic Practice – updated January 2026 (2026-27)

PLEASE READ BEFORE APPLYING

Important Information

Information provided by the University such as in presentations, University brochures and the University website, is accurate at the time of first disclosure. However, courses, University services and content of publications remain subject to change. Changes may be necessary to comply with the requirements of accrediting bodies or to keep courses contemporary through updating practices or areas of study. Circumstances may arise outside the reasonable control of the University, leading to required changes. Such circumstances include industrial action, unexpected student numbers, significant staff illness (where a course is reliant upon a person's expertise), unexpected lack of funding, severe weather, fire, civil disorder, political unrest, government restrictions and serious concern with regard to the transmission of serious illness making a course unsafe to deliver. After a student has taken up a place with the University, the University will look to give early notification of any changes and try to minimise their impact, offering suitable alternative arrangements or forms of compensation where it believes there is a fair case to do so.

Offers of a place to study at the University will provide up to date information on courses. The latest key information on courses, entry requirements and fees can be found at www.leeds.ac.uk/coursefinder. Please check this website before making any decisions.

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APPLICATION PROCESS

1.1 Application Links:

Foundation Programme:

<https://courses.leeds.ac.uk/i423/systemic-practice-foundation->

Intermediate programme:

<https://courses.leeds.ac.uk/i422/systemic-practice-intermediate->

Postgraduate Certificate: <https://courses.leeds.ac.uk/f805/systemic-practice-pgcert>

MSc in Systemic Family Therapy:

<https://courses.leeds.ac.uk/a792/systemic-family-therapy-msc>

1.2 Is there a deadline for application?

Foundation/Intermediate/Postgraduate Certificate: Due to anticipated high demand for course places, we would encourage early applications. The application deadline is 25th August 2026.

1.3 Do I need to provide University transcripts and degree certificate? What if I couldn't find my University degree certificate?

If you are registered with a relevant professional body (i.e. HCPC, NMC, UKCP, Social Work England, GMC, BACP, etc.) and you provide your registration number within the application, you will not be required to provide university transcripts or certificates.

If you are not registered with a professional body, please provide a copy of your prior University degree and academic transcripts, showing the modules you studied and grades achieved. The academic transcript needs to be official – signed and stamped. If you cannot find your University degree certificate or transcripts, please contact your university for a replacement or certified document. You need to bring along the original or certified true copies of the documentation to be verified when you register with the University in September.

1.4 Do I need to declare spent criminal convictions?

Please make sure you have read and completed the section of “Any criminal convictions” on the University of Leeds Application for Taught Postgraduate Study. In general a criminal record should not be regarded as an obstacle to studying at this University. In any event, the University will not take into account, when dealing with existing students and selecting applicants for admission, criminal convictions which are deemed “spent” under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 unless such convictions are deemed as “exceptions” under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975.

Applicants to any of the Systemic Practice and Family Therapy courses are NOT required to disclose spent offences. However, an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be required at the start of the MSc course by placement organisations. [The University of Leeds Policy Statement: Applicants and students with criminal records.](#)

1.5 Where can I get support for completing an application?

This guidance should answer most of your questions. If it doesn't, you can contact the Institute Admissions team:

Email: Pgmed-admissions@leeds.ac.uk Tel: +44 (0)113 3430 806

For technical difficulties with the portal contact the University Portal Enquiries Team:

study@leeds.ac.uk

1.6 I have been made an offer on the course and I have accepted the offer, but now I can't secure funding, what shall I do?

Please contact the course team familytherapy@leeds.ac.uk as soon as possible and discuss your situation. Depending on the course and your situation, deferred entry to next year can be easily arranged and you do not need to reapply for the course.

1.7 Is there an interview?

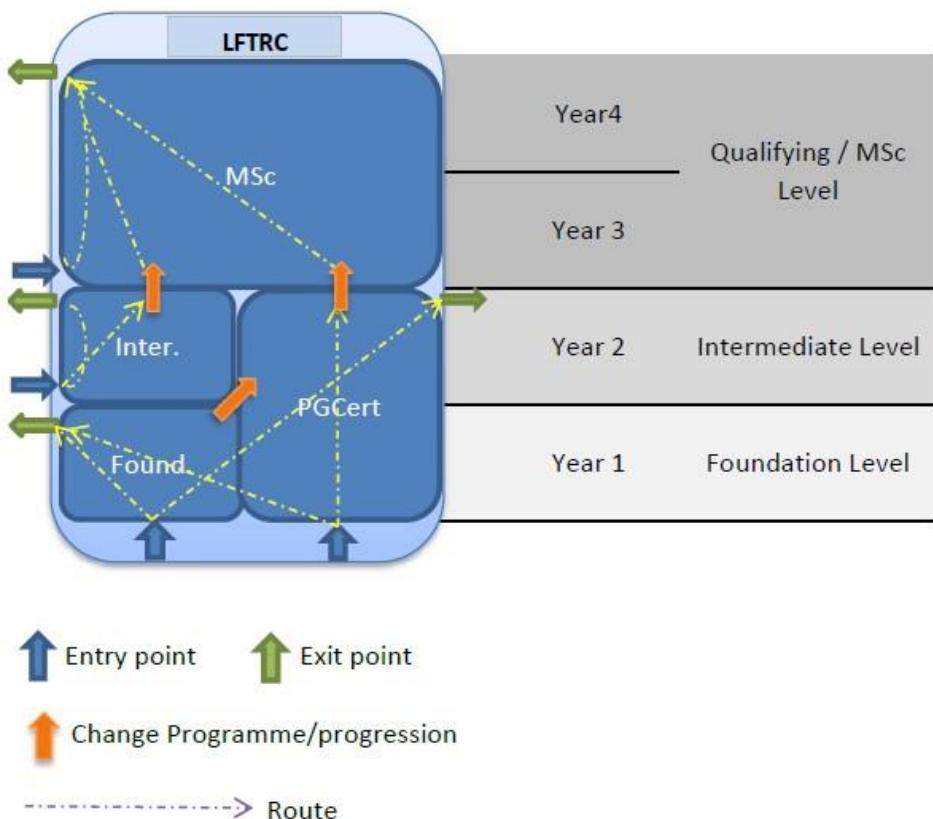
Most applicants to the Foundation Course, Intermediate Course or Postgraduate Certificate will not be required to attend an interview. However, in exceptional circumstances, an applicant may be invited to an interview before an admissions decision is made.

2 ABOUT THE COURSES

2.1 How are the courses related to each other?

[The Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice in the UK](http://www.aft.org.uk) (AFT) provides a framework for accrediting courses in family and systemic psychotherapy, and in systemic practice. There are three levels of systemic training, up to and including qualifying level which makes a total of four years training.

- * Foundation
- * Intermediate
- * Qualifying level (MSc in the University of Leeds)



Leeds Family Therapy & Research Centre (LFTRC) in the University of Leeds offers the following AFT accredited training courses:

Foundation Course in Systemic Practice

This is a part-time course which functions both as a stand-alone course to support the development of basic skills and knowledge of concepts and as an entry qualification for the Intermediate Course in Systemic Practice. It is designed for graduate-level professionals with a first professional qualification in a relevant mental health or social care area such as nursing, psychiatry, social work, clinical psychology or with a related professional qualification and/or experience via the professional APEL route and will introduce participants to a broad range of the concepts and techniques of systemic practice.

Intermediate Course in Systemic Practice

This is a part-time course which is a significant and useful training in its own right and also connects the Foundation course and the advanced clinical training (MSc in Systemic Family Therapy). This course has a multi-disciplinary focus and covers aspects of working with families in clinical settings, as well as wider application of systemic thinking and practice. It is suitable for professionals working in mental health nursing, psychiatry, social work, clinical

psychology, voluntary organisations and related fields who have completed Foundation level training or equivalent and with a related professional qualification and/or experience via the professional APEL route. Applicants must be working in a setting suitable to undertake the Systemic Practice requirement of 60 hours of systemic practice during the year. The practice requirement must be supported by the agency and have suitable clinical supervision arrangements as well as the facility to record, with client consent, one session (visual or audio) of clinical practice for assessment purposes.

Postgraduate Certificate in Systemic Practice

This is a part-time course over two years that covers the first two years of Family Therapy training; the Foundation Course in Systemic Practice and the Intermediate Course in Systemic Practice, and leads to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Systemic Practice from the University of Leeds to successful students. Upon completing this programme, students will be eligible to apply for the advanced clinical training (MSc in Systemic Family Therapy) leading to UKCP registration. This award is open to students who opt to complete both Foundation and Intermediate level training at Leeds.

MSc in Systemic Family Therapy

This two-year, part-time course provides qualifying advanced clinical training in systemic family therapy and successful completion leads to eligibility for registration with UKCP.

The course has approximately 20 full day teaching workshops over each year which includes theory, skills, research and personal professional development. In addition, students meet in weekly 4 hour supervision groups for supervised systemic practice. These are located in NHS clinics with a qualified systemic supervisor. Currently, we have training supervision groups in Bradford, Beverley, Derby, Leeds (CAMHS and adult services), Lincoln, Llandudno, Newcastle upon Tyne, and Sheffield. The sites of training clinics for future MSc cohorts are not yet finalised and will be arranged to best meet the location of students where this is possible.

Applicants must have an appropriate qualification and have successfully completed an Intermediate Course or equivalent. There is a single intake of MSc students approximately every two years.

2.2 What are the job prospects when I successfully complete the courses?

Foundation Course

The Foundation course taken alone (i.e. not as part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Systemic Practice) is a non-degree course and while there is no formal qualification, this training will provide you with theoretical knowledge and practical skills and develop the

extent to which you can work with clients in family and other relational settings. Successful completion provides eligibility to apply for the Intermediate Course.

Graduates of this course have gone on to work in a range of social and health care settings. Many have progressed to train as qualified family therapists to work in a range of settings including private practice.

Intermediate Course/PGCert

Students who complete the Intermediate level Systemic Practice training can apply for advanced clinical training and MSc courses in Family and Systemic Psychotherapy.

The standalone Intermediate course is not a formal qualification but is a recognised professional development indicating the knowledge and skills development in this training.

MSc

In addition to the University award of MSc Systemic Family Therapy, successful MSc students will be eligible to register with the UK Council for Psychotherapists as a Family and Systemic Psychotherapist and to practise as qualified family therapists.

2.3 What is the time commitment for each course?

Foundation Course

The course is held on approximately 17 Wednesday evenings (5pm to 8.30pm) between September 2026 and July 2027 plus three full days. Details of the course can be found [here](#) which includes detailed [module information](#) such as syllabus, student hours, and assessments.

Intermediate Course

The course is held on approximately 17 Wednesday evenings (5pm to 8.30pm) between September 2026 and July 2027 plus three full days. You will also be required to be able to complete at least 60 hours of Systemic Practice as lead clinicians with an additional 10 hours of receiving supervision during the year in your own work/placement agency. Details of the course can be found [here](#) which includes detailed [module information](#) such as syllabus, student hours, and assessments.

PGCert

This is a 2-year part-time course. In the first year, approximately 17 Wednesday evenings (5pm to 8.30pm) between September 2026 and July 2027 plus approximately three full days. The second year is held on approximately 17 Wednesday evenings (5pm to 8.30pm) plus two or three full days and will follow on from the first year. You will also be required to be able to complete at least 60 hours of Systemic Practice as lead clinicians with an additional 10 hours of receiving supervision during the second year in your own work/placement agency. Details of the course can be found [here](#) which includes detailed module information such as syllabus, student hours, and assessments for [Year 1](#) and [Year 2](#).

MSc Course

This is a 2 year part-time course with teaching days held over approximately 40 Wednesdays (10:00am- 4:30pm) during the 2 academic years. In addition, students attend a weekly 4-hour supervision clinic and undertake private study (a minimum ratio of 3:1 to teaching days). Detailed information about the course including modules information such as syllabus, student hours and assessment can be found [here](#).

2.3.1 Do you have any guidance about what my line manager/employers should consider offering as study time in addition to the time needed to attend the university on Wednesdays as a Foundation or Intermediate Course student?

For the Foundation Course (which is 30 credits at Masters level) the overall time is estimated at 300 hours of which 66 are in the classroom/online setting (please refer to the links above). This leaves 234 of private study over the year – about 6 hours a week during term times.

In our experience, arrangements may vary from a regular half day per week (which works best) to ad hoc time where needed for assignments and some flexibility for reading etc. We think it is also important to ensure that your clinical workload is adjusted where necessary to allow for study time. An overstretched student tends to underachieve and the benefits of a good developmental experience may be lost to other stresses.

2.4 What are the course dates?

Below are the **provisional** course dates for 2026-27. Please note these dates are subject to change without prior notice.

Foundation/Intermediate/PGCert

Date	Day	Time	Note
30/09/2026*	Wednesday	15:00-16:30 17:00-18.30 19:00-20:30	*Induction
07/10/2026	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
21/10/2026	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
04/11/2026	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	

18/11/2026	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
02/12/2026	Wednesday	10:00-16:30	All day
16/12/2026	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
06/01/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
20/01/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
03/02/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
24/02/2027	Wednesday	10:00-16:30	All day
03/03/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
17/03/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
31/03/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
27/04/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
12/05/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
19/05/2027	Wednesday	10:00-16:30	All day
26/05/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
16/06/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	
30/06/2027	Wednesday	17:00-20:30	

* Induction session for new students

2.5 Where does the teaching take place?

Although our intention is to deliver as much of the course as possible in person on campus, we may have occasional sessions online. Face-to-face teaching will take place on the University of Leeds campus. The current Foundation and Intermediate courses are running in the Baines Wing Building, and the MSc is in the Worsley Building (Building Number 95 [campus map](#)). Directions information can be found at [Find us | University of Leeds](#)

Over recent years, unforeseen circumstances have impacted on our ability to deliver all sessions face-to face (i.e., national rail strikes; social distancing guidance). We may have to

respond to changes in government or University advice and this may mean that all or some of the sessions would be delivered online.

2.6 Are there car parking facilities for students?

Students who are fully registered on the Foundation, Intermediate or PGCert courses are eligible to access University parking whilst attending the evening sessions on the course.

The University has designated parking bays located across the campus for blue badge holders. Please see [campus map](#) for locations of disabled parking bays.

Please note, the University encourages all staff and students to use public transport. The nearest railway station is Leeds City Station and the walk to the station is approximately 25 minutes.

2.7 Do I need to carry out any systemic work in the Foundation level course?

You do not need to be part of a family therapy team at this stage (although it can be very useful to do this alongside the Foundation Course if there is opportunity). It is however expected that you will be working in a clinical role or role that enables you to think about and draw on the ideas taught on the course and to bring relevant case material for discussion and for use in assignments.

2.8 About the systemic practice element of the Intermediate Course

2.12.1 What is the requirement for the practice element?

On Intermediate level training, you are required to undertake a minimum of 60 hours of systemic practice in your own agency setting, supported by at least 10 hours of clinical supervision. You will be required to keep an anonymised record of this practice within a portfolio, which forms one of the assessed components of the course. The practice requirement must be supported by the agency and have suitable clinical supervision arrangements as well as the facility to record, with client consent, one session (visual or audio) of clinical practice for assessment purposes. Throughout the programme, you will be encouraged to develop a commitment to actively promote ethical, anti-discriminatory practice and to highlight and critique culturally-based assumptions in your practice.

You are advised to access systemic supervision where at all possible and many work places are able to provide or support this. If it is not possible, you need to ensure that your supervisor and manager are supportive of your practice developments and your work is supervised in general clinical terms. On the course, there are opportunities to discuss anonymised clinical dilemmas and development of systemic practice in tutor groups. We could also put you in touch with clinicians locally where you may be able to access voluntary experience to support your learning.

2.12.2 Do practice hours have to be with a family with more than one person in the room?

We request that where possible, practice hours are with families/more than one person in the room, but practice with individuals is currently acceptable. We specify that practice hours must be therapeutic in nature (i.e. structured assessment sessions not involving systemic skills should not be included). If you are part of a reflecting team in a family therapy clinic, you can accrue up to 15 out of the 60 hours from your reflecting team practice.

2.12.3 Do the practice hours have to be recorded?

Yes. One session of at least 45 minutes of systemic practice must be recorded (visual or audio) for assessment purposes.

3 ADMISSIONS

3.1 What are the entry requirements?

Please following the links below and find detailed information in the Entry Requirements section on Course Search.

- [Foundation Course in Systemic Practice](#)
- [Intermediate Course in Systemic Practice](#)
- [Postgraduate Certificate in Systemic Practice – this programme incorporates both Foundation and Intermediate Courses](#)
- [MSc in Systemic Family Therapy](#)

3.2 I am interested in developing a career in mental health. Is the Foundation/PGCert in Systemic Practice suitable for me?

3.2.1 I've just completed my BSc in Psychology and I have limited clinical experience. Am I eligible to apply for the Foundation/PGCert Course?

The Foundation Course is primarily aimed at clinicians who already have a professional background, e.g. clinical psychology, social work, mental health nursing, etc. The course material is aimed at introducing clinicians to theories and techniques from the field of systemic practice, and to consider how they can apply these ideas in their roles.

Since you are just completing your BSc Psychology degree, we would require you to gain some further clinical experience before applying to our Foundation Course. The entry requirements expected by the Association of Family Therapy state that you need:

- A relevant professional training, or equivalent
- An opportunity to apply systemic ideas to a current work setting

'Equivalent' is not specified, but we would suggest that given the shortest professional training courses would be three years, then we would usually require clinical experience in a health or social care setting of at least three years. In practice, the students without a relevant professional training tend to be working in a variety of settings for example as graduate psychologists or support workers in therapeutic teams. Please contact the course team if you are unsure about the requirements for equivalence.

3.2.2 I have a bachelor degree in Linguistics. I have been working as a counsellor for five years and I just finished a Postgraduate Certificate in Counselling. Is the course suitable for me?

Yes. If you are keen to follow this route of family therapy, the usual starting place is the Foundation/PGCert. Your current experience is all valuable but if you do not have a core mental health professional training (psychiatry, accredited counsellor, clinical psychology, mental health, social work or nursing etc.), you would be considered a professional APEL student (see below). This means that your experience is considered as part of equivalence to a professional training but if you progress to qualifying level (MSc level) you might need to do additional study or placements to ensure that you have the full breadth of experience needed to practice as a UKCP registered therapist.

3.2.3 I have a BSc (Hons) in Psychology and a MSc in Forensic Psychology. I have over 8 years' experience in clinical and health psychology services working with individuals and families and I currently work in NHS and have access to families' cases in psychology services. Am I eligible to apply for the course?

Your experience is suitable for the course which are designed for qualified mental health professionals. The usual starting point for all (including qualified clinical psychologists, psychiatrists etc.) is at Foundation level or Postgraduate Certificate unless you have effectively completed the systemic foundation level theoretical study with 60 hours of specifically systemic content that covered the learning outcomes where you can apply enter at Intermediate Level. In practice the main group that have this equivalence are the clinical psychologists who have completed the equivalent of a Foundation Course as part of their training. Please see 3.5 below.

3.3 Why might it be more suitable for me to start with the Foundation Course rather than Postgraduate Certificate?

As the Foundation Course can be taken as a standalone module for one year it is a good option if you are new to Systemic Practice or to postgraduate study and may not be sure if you wish to commit to the two year Postgraduate Certificate. Most students who join the

Foundation Course later choose to transfer to the Postgraduate Certificate and continue to the second year. The transfer is quite straightforward provided you meet the additional requirements for the second year Intermediate Level.

As a standalone course, the Foundation Course also provides an exit point at the end of one year and easy re-entry into Postgraduate Certificate course if you decide to continue the training at a later stage.

3.4 What is APEL?

APEL stands for Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning. APEL procedures are used in two instances for some students during training:

- 1) APEL for applicants to the training course who do not have a first professional qualification in mental health or social care profession.
- 2) APEL to accredit students who have not completed a AFT Accredited Foundation Course in Family Therapy (1st year of the four year training) but have studied Family Therapy and Systemic Practice to a level equivalent to the Foundation Course and wish to apply to join the Intermediate Course (2nd year of the four year training). Please refer to the [APEL Information for Application](#) for systemic practice and family therapy programmes.

3.5 Can I enter directly to Intermediate or MSc?

The usual starting point for systemic training is at the Foundation Level (year 1 of Postgraduate Certificate). The Foundation Course includes students from a range of professional backgrounds, many of them are very experienced in work with individuals, families and couples but the assumption is that the course content is new in terms of students' previous exposure to systemic theory and practice.

If however, you have been in training that offers around 60 hours of systemic input, you could apply directly to the Intermediate Course. If your APEL application directly into Intermediate course is not successful, you will be automatically considered for Foundation Level.

Direct entry to the MSc level is only considered in exceptional circumstances. If you consider that this may apply to you then please discuss your situation with the course team at familytherapy@leeds.ac.uk as soon as possible and discuss your situation.

3.6 I have completed the Foundation Course in the University of Leeds several years ago, can I apply for entry into PGCert Year 2?

If you completed the Foundation Course at the University of Leeds within the previous **5** years (from the date it was completed/awarded), please declare this at the point of application. If your application is successful you can then study on the PGCert and complete this award on completion of the second year / Intermediate level.

If you completed the Foundation Course more than five years ago you may still be eligible to join the Intermediate level training. Please contact the course team on familytherapy@leeds.ac.uk to discuss your situation.

3.7 Will I be able to start the Intermediate Course in September if I carried out my Foundation Course elsewhere and it finishes after September?

If you have completed all of your assessments and already know your final grade, we may be able to offer you a place. If you are still completing course work after September you will likely need to see your course through to completion to satisfy course entry requirements.

4 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

4.1 Are the courses open for applicants from outside UK?

Yes, but we are not able to sponsor applicants who require a **student visa**. Please note all the courses are offered as part-time courses only. If you are an overseas student, before you start to prepare for taking any part-time courses in the UK, please contact the International Students Office of our University for immigration advice.

If you are applying for Intermediate level you need to be employed in a role where you have regular therapeutic contact with appropriate clients. For the Intermediate Course (PGCert Year 2), students are required to complete 60 hours of Systemic Practice as lead clinicians during the year in their own work/placement agency.

4.2 Am I required to submit English language qualifications?

If your first language is not English you will be asked to provide evidence that you have a suitable ability in the various skills of English by obtaining the minimum requirements in a University recognized English language qualification (IELTS overall of 7.0 with no component lower than 6.5 OR equivalent). For information on other English language equivalent qualifications please see our entry requirements webpage. Please contact the admissions team if you have any query.

Alternatively, if you are registered with a relevant UK professional body, you do not need to provide additional evidence of English language qualifications.

5 FEES AND FUNDING

5.1 What are the course fees?

Course fees for 2026-27 can be found following the link to the Course Finder of the University website

- [Foundation Course in Systemic Practice](#)
- [Intermediate Course in Systemic Practice](#)
- [Postgraduate Certificate in Systemic Practice – this programme incorporates both Foundation and Intermediate Courses](#)
- [MSc in Systemic Family Therapy](#)

5.2 How do I pay the course fees?

Course fees are charged annually when you register at the beginning of each academic year. If you are offered a place on the PGCert or the MSc, the **total** fees are divided equally across each year of study, i.e. you need to pay half of the total fees for first academic year, and the other half for the second academic year.

If you are to be sponsored by your employer, you are advised to have an agreement with your employer about the payment of fees in the event of temporary / permanent withdrawal from the course in the future, e.g. due to sickness or in the event of a change in employment. Course fees will be payable up to the time of withdrawal and the remainder payable on your return. In some circumstances, you may be personally liable for any outstanding fees, for example if you opt to continue the course after leaving employment with your employing sponsor.

5.3 Is there any funding available to cover course fees?

Historically, bursaries have been available to the local workforce employed by NHS Trusts in the West Yorkshire region. Staff working in third sector organisations who are commissioned by the local CCG's to deliver services to the NHS have also previously been eligible to apply for this funding. This money was most recently known as Workforce Development Funding (formerly called SSPRD/HEE bursaries).

Unfortunately, we have been notified that this funding stream has been discontinued and we are not currently aware of any alternative central funding stream. We would encourage you to approach your employing agency to discuss full or partial funding of fees.