



# MONEY MATTERS

– a guide to higher education student finance for the workplace

Workplaces face skills shortages like never before. By 2012, two thirds of jobs in the UK will need skills at or near Higher Education level (Skills White Paper 2005).

## For employers

The benefits of investing in a higher qualified workforce can achieve:

- *Improved performance and productivity*
- *Enhanced communication*
- *Higher retention and improved employee relations*
- *Improved organisational morale and motivation*

As an employer you may wonder how you can afford to pay for Higher Education. However, it can be very affordable – and given the future skills needs, it's an opportunity your organisation should not miss!

Some employers invest in Higher Education, paying some or all of their employees' fees and perhaps other costs. However, many mature and part time students can claim financial support in their own right. Working students often pay for their studies using a mixture of employer and other support.

## For employees

Higher education can mean:

- *Enhanced employability and prospects*
- *Improved confidence and competence at work*
- *A sense of achievement and personal progression*

There are more workplace-relevant courses than ever. Higher education is also more flexible, with part time, work-based and distance learning courses available and courses delivered locally in colleges as well as at universities.

Aimhigher Greater Manchester can advise people aged over 20 on course choices through their Pre-Entry Guidance Service. Details are available at [www.uni4me.com/who\\_else\\_can\\_help\\_/pegs.cfm](http://www.uni4me.com/who_else_can_help_/pegs.cfm) or ring one of the participating Universities. (N.B. This is an independent advice service based at each University and does not just give advice on their courses).

University of Bolton - 01204 903080

Manchester Metropolitan University - 0161 247 3483

University of Salford - 0161 295 5088

## What financial support can employees get?

Mature and part time students can apply to their local council for non-repayable grants for their course fees and other costs such as books and travel. For more information or to apply, employees should ask their local council or the university or college where they are thinking of studying.

## Help with course costs

Here are some figures to give you an idea of what is available.

A grant of up to £250 is available, to help meet the cost of books, travel and course expenditure. You will not have to repay this grant, and the amount you get is based on your household income and other circumstances.

Intensity of study	Maximum fee grant available	Maximum course grant available	Total maximum support
50% of an equivalent full-time course (i.e. 50-59%)	£765	£250	£1015
60% of an equivalent full-time course (i.e. 60-74%)	£920	£250	£1170
75%+ of an equivalent full-time course	£1150	£250	£1400

The information in this leaflet was correct at time of going to press February 2007; for an update please go to [www.studentsupportdirect.co.uk](http://www.studentsupportdirect.co.uk)

Or ring the Student Finance Direct Customer Support Office on 08456 077 577.

The Open University has a similar scheme of its own and students can apply direct to this when applying for their courses. More details of this are at [www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk) or telephone the regional centre on 0161 998 7272.

**Aimhigher...**  
greater manchester

**BURY**  
**LEARNING**  
**PARTNERSHIP**

**unionlearn**  
with the North West TUC

Unionlearn also has local and national links with the Open University offering discounts on some courses. For more information see [www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk). For half price offers on OU short courses for union members telephone 0161 998 7272 and ask for Widening Participation.

#### Additional help

Local colleges such as Bury College and Holy Cross College can give details about the Access to Learning Fund and Additional Fee Support. They can also offer general advice on financial support for students. Telephone 0161 280 8280 for Bury College and 0161 762 4500 for Holy Cross.

Depending on your course you may also be able to apply to professional bodies, charities and trusts. More information on these is at [www.egas-online.org.uk](http://www.egas-online.org.uk) and [www.grantsforindividuals.org.uk](http://www.grantsforindividuals.org.uk)

Alternatively you may be eligible for a Career Development Loan – see [www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/cdl/](http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/cdl/) or telephone 0800 585 505.

Courses may also be funded because they cover skills in high demand. At the time of writing these included courses in teaching, healthcare and social work. For more information go to [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) and click on Education and Learning or ring 08456 077 577.

#### For union members

Many unions offer national grants and scholarships for higher education. Try your union's regional office or website for more information.

#### For young employees

Why not consider Professional Apprenticeships? These are *fully funded* for those eligible. Employers can take on a young person recommended by the provider or nominate an existing young employee. The programme is largely delivered and assessed in the workplace and offers a package of qualifications including Foundation Degrees, professional qualifications, NVQs and/or technical certificates. Subjects offered include IT, finance, management and engineering amongst many more. For more information go to [www.skills-solutions.org.uk](http://www.skills-solutions.org.uk) or ring 0161 233 2600.

*Remember, even if you do have to pay some fees, they may well be payable in instalments – and higher education is an investment that can pay for itself more than once in increased efficiency, employability, promotion prospects and job satisfaction!*

*This leaflet was originally produced by Bury Learning Partnership in 2005 and has been adapted by Janet Valentine of Unionlearn with the North West TUC and in partnership with Aimhigher Greater Manchester in 2007.*

