

To: The Management Authorities of Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of Vocational Education Committees

Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Programme Capitation Changes and Participant Contribution

Introduction

1. Budget 2011 provided for a reduction in non-pay capitation rates (including the enhanced PLC capitation grant) as well as the introduction of a €200 annual PLC programme participant contribution. This Circular sets out the new enhanced capitation rates and the operating arrangements for the PLC programme participant contribution.
2. The rate changes apply from 1 January 2011 and PLC programme participant contribution arrangements will apply with effect from the 2011/2012 academic year.

Reduction in Enhanced PLC Programme Capitation Rate

3. With effect from the 1 January 2011, the new rates are:

Standard rate	€176.11
Equestrian rate	€745.46

4. In line with Circular Letter 36/95 the enhanced PLC programme capitation grant is allocated to providers to cover the cost of equipment, materials and general overheads for the running costs of the PLC programme.

PLC Programme Participant Contribution Arrangements

5. Providers must collect the participant contribution from all eligible participants (see below) and retain it. The Department will recoup the appropriate sum by setting it against the enhanced capitation grant.
6. In order to facilitate this, providers will be required to make a return to the Department, setting out the total number of participants enrolled and the total number of participants exempted from payment of the contribution (template attached). The Department will then calculate the amount, if any, due to be paid in enhanced capitation. Where the amount which falls to be collected exceeds the amount due in enhanced capitation, an adjustment equivalent to this amount will be made to the general and post-primary non-pay allocation, the non-pay allocation or the per capita funding allocation made to the VEC, community/comprehensive school or secondary school, as appropriate.
7. Where the amount which falls to be collected is less than the amount due in enhanced PLC capitation this amount will be paid in one moiety in the first quarter of the following financial year. However where there is a significant amount of enhanced PLC capitation due to be paid consideration will be given to making an initial payment in December with the remainder being paid in the first quarter of the following financial year.

8. Providers must seek and retain evidence that a participant is exempt from paying the contribution.

Eligible Participants

9. Any learner who enrolls on an approved PLC course is eligible to pay the €200 PLC programme participant contribution.
10. The contribution is an annual contribution. Eligible participants on PLC courses of more than one year's duration must pay the contribution for each year of that course.
11. The following categories of participant are exempt from paying the contribution:
 - Full medical card holders in their own right and their dependent children;
 - Those who are eligible under the student grant scheme;
 - Those in receipt of the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) or Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) allowances.

PLC Charges

12. As set out in Circular 36/95, providers may request a payment from participants in respect of the following:
 - Books, uniforms/clothing or other equipment which become the personal property of the participant
 - Student Services
 - Registration charges by professional bodies
 - Examination fees
13. Circular 36/95 also allows for the payment, by prospective participants, of a non-refundable deposit (usually €30) to reserve a place on an approved PLC course.
14. Where such additional charges are levied by providers in respect of PLC courses, it must be made clear to participants that the exemptions available to the categories of participant at (10) above apply only to the PLC Programme Participant Contribution.
15. No other charges are allowed under this circular letter.

Further Queries

16. All queries in relation to this circular should be addressed to Further Education Section at plc@education.gov.ie, or by phone at 090 648 4258/7/6.

Seamus Hempenstall
Principal Officer
Further Education Section
Skills Division
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