

GLA Adult Education Budget and Hong Kong Citizens

Guidance for organisations supporting Hongkongers

Key information

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Foreword

This document outlines the eligibility of Hongkongers in London to adult education budget (AEB) funded provision and includes information on additional funding available via the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for those on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Scheme.

What does the AEB fund?

The AEB funds education and training for adults aged 19 and above and delivery in London is managed by the Mayor of London. The AEB funds much more than Basic Skills (digital skills, English for speakers of other

languages (ESOL), Functional English and maths). It funds courses that can help you develop more job focussed or creative skills. Courses include certificates, awards and diplomas from Entry Level to Level 4 in, for example, customer service; floristry; hair and beauty; hospitality; food safety; barista skills; animal care; welding; horticulture; engineering; adult care; and dental nursing. The AEB also supports four statutory entitlements to full funding for eligible adult learners for the following qualifications:

- English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade A* - C or grade 4, or higher
- First full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23
- First full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23.
- Information technology ('digital') skills, up to and including level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below level 1

AEB-funded courses are delivered by a range of different providers in a range of locations, including further education colleges, local authorities, independent training providers, institutes of adult learning, sixth form colleges, universities, schools, children's centres, places of worship, libraries and community centres.

Who is eligible for AEB funding?

The [AEB Funding Rules](#) outline who is eligible for funding in London. Beneficiaries must be ordinarily resident in London. Generally, beneficiaries are required to have British, Irish or EEA nationality or have permission to stay (leave to enter or remain) in the UK long term to be able to access AEB-funded courses. Long term visas include work, family, and other visas, including the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa, where permission to stay in each case is granted for more than 12 months.

People seeking asylum ('asylum seekers') are eligible for full AEB funding after six months in the UK. Some people who are on humanitarian routes, even if they do not have a long-term visa, are eligible for AEB funding on arrival. The groups below are not required to meet any minimum residency requirement.

- Refugee Status
- Discretionary Leave to Enter or Remain
- Exceptional Leave to Enter or Remain
- Indefinite Leave to Enter or Remain
- Humanitarian Protection
- Leave Outside the Rules
- Ukraine Family Scheme
- Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine)
- Ukraine Extension Scheme
- the husband, wife, civil partner or child of any of the above
- Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 Leave
- Calais Leave to Remain
- British Nationals evacuated from Afghanistan under Operation Pitting
- British Nationals evacuated from Afghanistan by the UK government before 6 January 2022

Who is not eligible for AEB funding?

Specific groups of people are explicitly excluded from AEB funding regardless of their length of residency: people who are unable to evidence their permission to stay in the UK; people on a Student Visa; those who are visiting the UK, with or without a visa; and those whose biometric residence permit (BRP) or their resident permit imposes a study prohibition or restriction on the individual. In addition, dependents of people on Student Visas are only eligible for AEB funding after three years' residence in the UK.

No Recourse to Public Funds

The learner's immigration permission in the UK may have a 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) condition. 'Public funds' are defined in the Immigration Rules, and the benefits and services listed do not include education or any education funding. Therefore, this condition does not affect a learner's eligibility, which must be decided under the normal eligibility conditions.

Course fees

This will depend on an assessment of the learner's income status. Generally, in order to be eligible for full funding, i.e., free courses, a learner must either be in receipt of state benefits or employed and earning below the London Living Wage. However, where a learner is out of work and falls outside of benefits arrangements, due to, for example, a 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) condition, they will also be eligible for free courses.

Where a learner is not deemed to be eligible for full funding, and unless they have a statutory entitlement to that course, they will be expected to meet part of the cost of their course. This will depend on the level, intensity and duration of the course. Some colleges will be able to offer instalment plans, and hardship funds are also available to support learners who cannot afford course fees. Please consult your local provider for further assistance on funding eligibility.

Additional funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for adults on the Hong Kong BN(O) Scheme

Where a learner is intending to do a course to improve their English language or literacy, local authorities and local authority adult education providers may claim £850 made available for adults on the Hong Kong BN(O) Scheme to support with any course costs, including childcare, sector specific qualifications such as IELTS and OET, and other ESOL and literacy related expenses. Adult education providers have been made aware of this additional funding to support learners on the BN(O) Scheme.

Evidence of immigration status

Learners may evidence their permission to stay in a range of ways, including presentation of a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), passport, vignette in their passport or other evidence from the Home Office confirming status. For a detailed outline of how learners may evidence their AEB eligibility, please refer to clauses 47 and 112-127 in the [GLA AEB Grant Funding and Performance Management Rules](#).

Providers are required to check documentation to ensure the learner is eligible for AEB funding but are not required to copy and store sensitive immigration or financial information.

Evidence of low income

In order to evidence eligibility for full funding, i.e., free courses providers must be satisfied that the learner is unemployed, on a low income, or out of work and outside benefit arrangements. Employed learners must provide evidence which confirms that they earn below the London Living Wage. Unemployed learners must provide evidence of low income through proof of state benefits or other evidence of take-home pay through proof of state benefits or other evidence of take-home pay where the individual does not or cannot claim state benefits. Evidence may include payslips, Universal Credit Statements, employment contracts, bank statements or self-declarations. To allow for flexibility this list is not exhaustive. For a detailed outline of how learners may evidence their AEB eligibility, please refer to clauses 47 and 112-127 in the [GLA AEB Grant Funding and Performance Management Rules](#). Savings do not count towards income and are not a factor in eligibility for funding.

Providers are required to check documentation to ensure the learner is eligible for AEB funding but are not required to copy and store sensitive immigration or financial information.

Where to find an AEB provider

The GLA hosts information on AEB and non-AEB funded [ESOL providers in London](#) on its website. Additionally, ESOL Advice Services, Networks and Single-Points of Contact (SPOCs) may exist in some boroughs. These organisations support learners with finding a suitable ESOL course in their local area. The GLA maintains a list of local [ESOL Advice Services/Networks/SPOCs](#).

Things to note

- Although the AEB funds a variety of courses at a range of levels, the availability of courses and levels may vary across providers. This means not all providers will offer all of the courses that are eligible for funding under the AEB.
- Although a learner may be eligible for AEB funded provision straight-away, where courses are over-subscribed, they may need to wait to join a class.
- The AEB is the main source of funding for ESOL in London, but it is not the only source. To find out more about other funding streams, and eligibility criteria, please refer to our detailed [ESOL for Resettlement guidance](#).

- Learners may only attend one AEB-funded course with the same learning aims, e.g., ESOL, at the same time. However, they are free to attend ESOL provision funded by other funding streams at the same time as AEB-funded provision, unless the other funding stream's rules say otherwise.
- Some adult education providers are funded via the AEB alongside funding from other sources. Each funding stream will have different eligibility criteria. As such, it is advised that even where a learner believes they may not be eligible for a course or eligible for a free course, the learner or organisation supporting them approach the provider to confirm.

Questions and queries

Questions and queries related to access to AEB funded provision should be directed at AEB providers in the first instance. Learners might have questions, or a complaint based on their experience. Guidance on how to do so is available on the [GLA's webpages](#).

The Hong Kong Welcome Hub at the GLA can offer support and advice where further guidance is required: HongKongVCSE@london.gov.uk.

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