

PE1738/A

Scottish Council of Deans of Education submission of 21 October 2019

Following Mr Molloy's petition to The Public Petitions Committee on behalf of Future Teachers in Scotland, I have consulted with members of the Scottish Council of Deans of Education (who represent the eleven providers of initial teacher education in Scotland) and we have agreed the following response.

As a principle the Council agrees that no student should be asked to undertake a placement without some form of recompense. Usually that recompense is in the form of the accrual of academic credit following successful completion of a placement and the reimbursement of any expenses above and beyond those normally accrued travelling to and from university.

Council members did differ in opinions related to the particular circumstances highlighted by Mr Molloy, however, the principle we have outlined above holds.

With respect to the particular requirements of the degree programme to which Mr Molloy refers, the institution in question has provided the following response:

We recognise the difficulties students experience funding their study. Students have access to and can claim for excess placement expenses and advance of expenses. These processes are managed through our Undergraduate Office Placement Unit. Students are aware that their claim is for excess travel expenses, e.g. expenses over and above those they would have incurred while attending University. They are also aware that we offer an advance of expenses if the paperwork is received 10 working days before placement begins. Excess expenses cover all forms of travel. All information, claim forms and guidelines relating to excess expenses/advance of expenses, can be found on the Student VLE (Learn) site, and within placement handbooks. Some student expenses are processed slightly differently, e.g. due to placement's arranged before and after the University Semester periods.

With respect to the placement specifically described by Mr. Molloy:

On this programme the Year 3 placement experience reflects the school academic year providing students with an authentic, extended, site-based learning experience. During the Year 3 placement experience students are not on a full-time timetable. Information about the extended nature of the placement experience was specified in all marketing materials providing information on the programme, this was also explicitly stated at university open days, interview days and post-offer visit days. With regards to claiming travel expenses, before semester and after semester periods students could claim the full amount of their travel to the placement school for the period covered by

the claim. During Semester periods students could claim their excess travel costs only.

The Committee will note the degree programme in question is no longer recruiting, however, the Council recognises that placements are extremely demanding for all student teachers and can confirm that all providers of initial teacher education award academic credit following successful completion of one or more placement experiences and reimburse students for the additional travel such placements incur.