

Credit Card Policy



Review Date

January 2024

Ratified

January 2024

Next Review Date

January 2028

Responsible Directorate

Operations

Our Trust

*These four critical questions make it clear who we are and what we do.
We ask ourselves these questions to guide our work and our improvement.*

Why do we exist?

To **transform life chances** by achieving the highest possible standards and preparing all our students to lead successful lives.

How do we behave?

- **Hard work**
We are determined to see things through to the end and are resilient when faced with challenges.
- **Integrity**
We do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.
- **Teamwork**
We work together to help everyone succeed.

What do we do?

- We educate, safeguard and champion all our learners.
- We set high standards for ourselves and our learners.
- We build the powerful knowledge and cultural capital which stimulate social mobility and lifelong learning.

How will we succeed?

1. Aligned autonomy
2. Keeping it simple
3. Talent development

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1 | Introduction

- 1.1 Though titled the 'Credit Card' policy, the Trust does not hold credit cards per se, but rather 'charge cards' where the Trust pays the balance on each card at the end of every month. This policy chiefly refers to charge cards issued on our instruction by our banking provider Lloyds. For the purposes of simplicity, the charge cards will be referred to as 'credit cards' in this policy. A separate addendum in this policy sets our procedures regarding other charge cards including 'Screwfix' and fuel cards.
- 1.2 The principle of this policy is to:
- Allow our colleagues access to efficient and alternative means of payment for approved expenses; whilst maintaining the necessary financial controls over the use of our Trust's funds.
 - Improve the managerial reporting related to credit card purchases through setting out the responsibilities of card holders and others within the month end processes, ensuring that spend is appropriately captured and coded within the monthly management accounts. All expenses must be agreed in writing in advance with the principal (academy-based staff) or / line manager (central and regional based staff). Details of expenses claimed should be submitted on the appropriate expenses claim form with accompanying receipts and forms should be signed by both the claimant and the principal/line manager.
 - Improve the efficiency and reduce costs of payable processing. The Trust preferred procurement route is to plan and purchase through purchase orders or regular supermarket online purchases. However, the Trust acknowledges that the use of credit cards is important for urgent or 'card only' spend and, in some cases, this method can offer significant value for money.
 - Provide an audit trail of senior leaders' personal expenses and approval of the appropriateness/probity of spend (Academies Account Direction requirement).

2 | Policy

- 2.1 As documented in our ATT Finance Policy:
- Wherever possible, and in the first instance, all purchases should be made via a purchase order within PSF (thus following our approval process) and paid via the BACs process. Credit card purchases should only be used where this is not practically possible.
 - At the academy level where online e-procurement requires the use of a credit card payment; a Credit Card Order Requisition form (must be completed by and authorised by the budget holder prior to passing onto the Finance Administrator for processing. Where the Principal is the card holder, they will use their card directly to make purchases and retain all receipts/invoices and upload these to the relevant SharePoint site.
 - For purchases greater than £100, a Regional Finance Officer must approve the Credit Card Order Requisition, prior to making the purchase.
 - The cardholder **must be** the individual making the purchase (i.e., preventing the lending of the card to another individual).

2.2 The day-to-day operation and control of the credit cards is the responsibility of the Director of Finance.

2.3 Credit card holders will be limited to the following roles with indicative monthly spend limits as follows:

- CEO - £5,000
- PA to CEO - £10,000
- Deputy CEO - £2,500
- Senior Central Finance - £10,000
- Regional Finance Manager - £12,000
- Principals Range - £2,500 - £8,000 *
- Finance Assistants (Primary academies) Range - £1,500 - £5,500 *
- Secondary Finance Assistants /Academy Manager Range - £4,000 - £12,000*

*NB only one card would be issued per academy across both Principals and Finance Assistant roles

2.4 Additional cards can be approved by the Deputy CEO Finance and Operations.

2.5 The misuse of such cards shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

2.6 Credit card holders must not:

- Lend their card to another person to use. If the cardholder is unable to make the purchase in person, then the individual requesting the use of the card must purchase the item themselves and be reimbursed via our ATT Expenses Policy.
- Use the credit card for personal or private purchases (i.e., non-business use).
- Use the credit card for purchases without first ensuring there is sufficient budget available to meet the cost.
- Use the card for cash advances (these are strictly prohibited under any circumstances). This includes the use of any form of cash withdrawal for cash back facility.

2.7 Cardholders will be required to sign a Cardholder Agreement (Appendix 1) indicating that they accept these terms.

2.8 Individuals who do not adhere to this policy risk the revocation of their credit card privileges and possible disciplinary action.

3 | Procedures

3.1 Credit cards will be registered to individuals within those roles listed in 2.3, on a case-by-case basis and at the Trust's discretion.

3.2 Recipients of credit cards will be required to sign the Cardholder Agreement Form (Appendix 1) confirming adherence to this policy.

At the academy level:

3.3 Prior to using the credit card, any Finance Assistant cardholder must complete the *Credit Card Requisition form* and obtain the approval of the Principal. If the Principal is the card holder their spend is retrospectively approved by the Approver in 3.4.3 below. In any event, if the purchase exceeds £100, then prior approval is required by the Regional Finance Officer / Finance Partner.

3.4 Each card holder can access a personal Credit card SharePoint folder shared with the finance team. On the last day of each month the Finance team download the monthly credit card statements for all users from the Lloyds portal and store the statements within the card holder's folder.

3.5 By close of play of the first working day of the month, the card holder provides full VAT receipts / invoices for each purchase and gives a clear description of the spend and the nominal codes/cost centres against which the spend should be allocated.

3.6 The Finance Assistant prepares the monthly Credit Card Reconciliation (Appendix 2) which reconciles the total receipts and spend to the descriptions and monthly credit card statement values and sets out the nominal codes and cost centres where each cost will be allocated. The value of spend on the Credit Card Monthly Statement Reconciliation must equal the statement value. Any missing receipts or invoices must be highlighted on this document.

3.7 Finance Assistants print off the Credit Card Reconciliation and takes it to their Principals for review and signature prior to the end of working day 2 each month. The signed forms are scanned, stored electronically in the SharePoint folders and copies sent to the relevant Approver. The day 2 deadline allows for the spend values to be included within the management accounts for the appropriate period.

3.8 The Regional Finance Officers/Finance Partners access the signed credit card reconciliations before working day 6 and process the data in the correct month.

At the Central team Level

3.9 The Central Finance Assistants download the credit card statements for each user by the last working day of the month.

3.10 The cardholder uploads invoices and receipts to the cardholder's personal folder within the Finance SharePoint site by the end of working day 5.

3.11 The Central Finance Assistants prepare the Credit Card Reconciliations. The value of spend on the Credit Card Monthly Statement Reconciliation must equal the statement value. Any missing receipts or invoices must be highlighted on this document.

3.12 The central finance team send the credit card reconciliation to cardholder for their email approval and forward the approved reconciliation to the relevant Approver for review of appropriateness of spend (see Approver table below). The central finance team process the costs in the correct month.

3.13 The monthly credit card reconciliations should be approved as follows each month:

Cardholders and Monthly approval of spend	Complete the Credit Card Monthly Statement Reconciliation	Approver	Finance (responsible for posting to PSF)
Chief Executive Officer	Finance Assistant	Chair of Trustees	Finance Assistant
PA to the Chief Executive Officer	Finance Assistant	CEO	Finance Assistant
Deputy CEO	Finance Assistant	CEO	Finance Assistant
Director of Education	Finance Assistant	Deputy CEO	Finance Assistant
Director of ATT Institute	Project Systems Accountant	Deputy CEO	Project Systems Accountant
Principal as cardholder	Finance Assistant	Director of Education	Regional Finance Officer
Academy Finance Administrator as card holder	Academy Finance Administrator	Principal	Regional Finance Officer
Central Finance / Regional Finance cardholder	Central Finance / Regional Finance cardholder	Director of Finance	Financial Controller

4 | Credit Card Holder Key Responsibilities

- 4.1 The cardholder must retain and upload all Full VAT receipts and invoices to the SharePoint folder within the timescales above to allow for posting to PS Financials within the correct month.
- 4.2 The cardholder must sign off on the Credit Card Reconciliation document within the timescales stated. PSF should only be updated once this reconciliation process has been completed. Transactions should not be posted to PSF in isolation and the transaction values as per the credit card statement should be updated into PSF.
- 4.3 All credit cardholders will to the best of their ability ensure that the credit cards are held securely (e.g., either in the academy safe or if taken off-site by the cardholder only).
- 4.4 Lost or stolen credit cards will be reported immediately by the cardholder to the Director of Finance.

- 4.5 The cardholder may **ONLY** use the credit card for the following purposes (subject to 3.3):
- For academy/central purchases; only if it is not practical to use the purchase order system (for example, the purchase of food from the local supermarket for educational purposes). It is expected that such spend is minimal as most purchases can be made via the purchase order system using approved Trust suppliers. The purchase must be made by the cardholder; otherwise, the expense must be incurred by the individual and reclaimed via the ATT Expenses Policy.
 - For academy-based staff; the Principal has at their discretion the ability to approve the credit card to be used to purchase travel tickets (train, bus, etc) and accommodation on behalf of staff members. If the travel involves the Principal, authorisation must be sought from the Regional Educational Finance Officer prior to purchase, in order to avoid self-authorisation of spend.
- 4.6 The Cardholder may **NOT** use the credit card for the following purposes unless specifically authorised in advance by the DCEO Finance and Operations in his capacity as Chief Finance Officer:
- For personal or private expenses (i.e. non-business use)
 - For the business expenses of academy staff, such as hotel accommodation costs, meals etc (unless covered by 3.8.2).
 - On gifts for staff or their family, such as flowers
 - On spend whereby the Trust already has an agreed central contract (e.g. catering, cleaning, ICT)
 - On spend whereby the Trust already has an approved supplier (e.g. Screwfix, central Amazon account).
 - For subscriptions or memberships.
 - For any capital purchases (e.g. ICT equipment, tables, chairs etc).

5 | Other Charge cards e.g., Screwfix/Fuel Cards

- 5.1 The Trust may, at its discretion, permit an individual to hold a 'restricted use' charge card typically for premises costs or minibus fuel.
- 5.2 The Premises charge cards (typically Screwfix) are useful for small emergency purchases and to obtain discount. The cards are held typically by our site teams who are outsourced to our Facilities Management provider. The Director of Estates will review premises spend via Screwfix cards regularly for reasonableness.
- 5.3 The fuel cards are typically held by a nominated individual in the Academy staff team. Spend on these cards will be monitored against budget.
- 5.4 The finance team will manage the processing of fuel and premises costs to the normal budget codes each month via their access to the portal for the charge card provider.

Appendix 1 – Cardholder Agreement Form

Name of cardholder:	
I hereby acknowledge receipt of the following credit card: (insert credit card number)	<p style="text-align: center;">_ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _</p>
<p>I understand that improper use of this card may result in disciplinary action as well as personal liability for any improper purchases. As a cardholder, I agree to comply with the ATT Credit Card Policy and other applicable policies.</p> <p>I will strive to obtain the best value for money for the Trust when using the credit card.</p>	
Signature (Cardholder):	
Date:	
Signature (Deputy CEO Finance & Operations):	
Date:	

Appendix 2- Credit Card Monthly Statement Reconciliation

Academy / Director			Name of Cardholder	Credit Card Month/Year		Credit Card Statement Value £	
No	Date	Supplier	Description	Nominal code	Cost Centre	Net £	VAT Total
Total Credit Card Spend							
Credit card statement attached (Y/N):							
I confirm that the credit card has been used in accordance with the Credit Card Policy and that the purchases represent the best value for money for the academy.							
Signature (Cardholder):							
Date:							
Signature (Approver):							
Date:							