

POLICY ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF STUDENT SUPPORT FUNDS



PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Student support funds are allocated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to provide additional support to students aged 16 and over, who are experiencing financial difficulty with meeting the costs associated with learning. These funds are allocated through a means tested system. Funds are allocated in 5 categories:

- I. 16 - 19 Vulnerable Groups Bursary (ESFA)
- II. 16 - 19 Discretionary Bursary (ESFA)
- III. 19+ Adult Discretionary Learner Support including Childcare (AEB)
- IV. Advanced Learner Loans Bursary (ESFA)
- V. Free Meals (within the 16-19 categories) (ESFA)

The College aims to support as many eligible students as possible and will prioritise supporting the costs associated with travelling to college, compulsory uniform or equipment costs or other costs compulsory for the achievement of the course.

Due to the limitations on the total amount of student support funds available, it may be necessary to cap the amount of funding available to each student. This will be reviewed on an on-going basis dependent on the number of eligible students.

SCOPE

- I. The *Vulnerable Groups Bursary* supports students who are between 16 and 19 and assessed as being in need of financial assistance on either full or part-time funded courses. Young people must satisfy the residency criteria as stated in the document *ESFA Funding guidance for young people 2020 to 2021*.
- II. The *Discretionary Bursary* supports students who are between 16 and 19 and assessed as being in need of financial assistance on either full or part-time funded courses. Young people must satisfy the residency criteria as stated in the document *ESFA Funding guidance for young people in 2020 to 2021*.
- III. The *Adult Discretionary Learner Support Fund* supports students who are over 19 and assessed as being in need of financial assistance on a full or part-time course. Students must satisfy the residency criteria as stated in the *ESFA funded adult education budget (AEB) funding and performance management rules 2020 - 2021*.
- IV. The *Advanced Learner Loans Bursary* supports students who are studying a course funded by an Advanced Learner Loan.
- V. *Free Meals* advice is set by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and cites colleges' requirement to provide free meals to disadvantaged 16 to 18 year old students (or learners aged over 19 who have an Educational, Health and Care Plan in further education (FE) funded institutions).

Funding Agreements have been amended and extended to place a legal duty on further education institutions to comply with requirement to provide free meals. Young people must satisfy the eligibility criteria as stated in the document *Free meals in further education funded institutions: guide for the 2020 to 2021 academic year*.

Student support funds do not support students who are participating on a waged apprenticeship programme or who are receiving assistance from specified Government schemes. The support funds do not support students participating in Higher Education courses.

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

The responsibility for the administration of the fund lies within the Student and Customer Services Team and is monitored by the Head of Student Data and Funding.

The fund allocation is administered in accordance with current ESFA Funding Guidance and College Policies and Procedures.

All applications will be considered on a first come, first served basis. Eligibility does not guarantee funding. Award decisions will be made in accordance with the policy, principles of need and equity and limited to funds available. A panel comprising representative managers will meet at agreed points within the award cycle to make awarding decisions.

Financial assistance is awarded for this academic year only, subject to the continuing availability of funds and is dependent on the learner's continued study on the assessed programme.

Monitoring whilst on programme

Scheduled monthly payments will be conditional on the student meeting expected standards:

- Attendance or engagement of at least 90% (unless there are exceptional medical or other extenuating circumstances). Positive attendance types are: / = present and L = late.
- Behaviour which meets the Respect at College Policy.

If such standards are not met, the payment(s) will be suspended, unless otherwise agreed by the Head of Student Experience.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS, DEFINITIONS

Financial Support Information Sheet 2020/21

Application Form for Financial Assistance 2020/21

Appendix 1 – Bursary Support Fund Procedure 2020/21

Appendix 2 – Adult Discretionary Support Fund Procedure 2020/21

Appendix 3 – Adult Discretionary Support Fund Procedure for Childcare 2020/21

Appendix 4 – Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund 2020/21

Appendix 5 – Care To Learn Procedure 2020/21

Appendix 6 – Free Meals Procedure 2020/21

Appendix 7 – Travel Allowance Calculations 2020/21

Appendix 8 – Payment 2020/21

Policy Review				
Owner	Position	Approved by SMT	Approval date	Review Period
Emma Cox	Vice Principal Finance & Resources	Signed:	15/07/2020	Annual Review date July 2021

Author/Owner	Summary of Changes	Date	Date last reviewed by SED	Recommend to SED Y/N
Emma Cox	Amendments to reflect changes in process and eligibility	04.04.17	-	Y
Emma Cox	Amendments to reflect changes in process and eligibility	19.06.18	14.06.17	N
Jane Warren/Emma Cox	Amendments to reflect changes in process and eligibility	10.06.19	14.06.17	

Initial Equality Impact Screening			
Have you consulted on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function? Yes Details: consultation with the Student & Customer Services Team, FE Colleges Support Group, SMT members			
What evidence has been used for this assessment?			
Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way? Indicate Y where applicable			
Group Age Disability Gender (incl. Transgender) Race (incl. Gypsy & Traveller) Religion or belief Sex Sexual orientation Marriage & civil partnership Pregnancy & maternity Other groups (see guidance)	Negative impact	Positive impact	Evidence
Please give details: Although funds are targeted to vulnerable groups based on household income, we are widening our support offer to reach more students on all courses at college that have previously been excluded due to resources. For 2015/16 the only limiting factor is now the 3 miles travel boundary. Amends to transport to allow full assistance towards County Ticket to help access learning			
If any negative impacts are identified, are there any related policies, services, strategies, procedures or functions that need to be assessed alongside this screening? If yes, please detail below:			
Should the policy proceed to a full Equality Impact Assessment? No If no, please give reasons: there are no negative impacts identified.			
Declaration We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out on this policy and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the College and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment Completed by Author: Emma Cox Position: VP Finance & Resources Date: 04.04.17 Reviewed by Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity Group: Date: 14.06.17			
Comments from Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity Group Review:			

BURSARY SUPPORT FUND PROCEDURE 2020/21 16 - 19 STUDENTS

Application and Awarding Process

Applications will be assessed, in the order in which they are received and processed as outlined in the published Information Sheet provided to students. The application is assessed using the assessment section on the back of the application form and is based on household income and personal circumstances. Assessment of applications will start from 3rd August 2020. All applications received by 14th August 2020 will be assessed for eligibility. The College cannot guarantee applications received after this date will be assessed.

Funds are available to support transport, equipment, uniform and any other relevant course related costs with which the students may need assistance, as long as eligibility criteria is met. Costs not supported by the bursary include those associated with enrichment activities, gym membership etc. Assistance is assessed on an individual basis.

1. Vulnerable Groups Bursary Support Funds

Eligibility

These are awarded to:

- Children in Care.
- Care leavers.
- 16-19 students in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or a partner.
- Students in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right as well as in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own right.

Students will be required to provide evidence of eligibility e.g. letter from local authority/social worker/leaving care workers, proof of Income Support, Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit and Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payment.

A student who qualifies for a course kit/uniform will have this deducted from their Guaranteed Bursary total. If a student is a child in care or a care leaver, kit/uniform should be purchased by Social Services; guidance will be available through their support worker.

2. Discretionary Bursary Support Funds

Eligibility

These are awarded to:

Students aged 16-19 who can provide evidence of household income below £30,000 will be eligible for a contribution towards their travel whilst using public transport or the full cost of travelling on the College buses YC1, YC2, YC3 and YC4. Where a student provides evidence that there is no suitable/feasible bus route enabling them to access the college, the college may in some circumstances provide alternative assistance through a cash travel allowance.

Evidence of household income **MUST** be submitted with the application to enable an assessment to be made.

Funds are available to support transport, equipment, uniform and any other course related costs with which the students may need assistance, as long as eligibility criteria is met. Costs not supported by the bursary include those associated with enrichment activities, gym membership etc. Assistance is assessed on an individual basis.

Evidence of income:

- Copy of parent(s)' and/or partner's P60 or latest monthly payslip or 4 most recent weekly payslips.
- Full copy (totalling 6 pages) of the household's Tax Credit Award notice for 2020/21.
- Evidence of parent(s) and/or partner being in receipt of one of the following benefits on 1st July of the academic year:
 - Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
 - Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
 - Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
 - Income Support (IS)
 - Universal Credit (UC)
 - Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Evidence of household income, of less than £30,000 in audited accounts for self-employed people, bank statements for child maintenance payments, if this is your only source of income etc.

Bursary Fund applications will not be assessed without the inclusion of correct evidence.

Students will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing following assessment indicating how and when they will receive their award if eligible.

Where a student is awarded support for the cost of equipment, as appropriate Yeovil College can purchase the equipment on the student's behalf. In some circumstances the student may be asked to purchase the equipment and Yeovil College will reimburse the cost to the person who paid on production of a correct receipt. The student will be required to return any equipment if they withdraw/are excluded from college before the end of the course.

Students who are successfully awarded a bursary are able to make further financial requests throughout the year if there are additional costs for their Study Programme, however, the College cannot guarantee any additional awards.

ADULT DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT FUND PROCEDURE (Excluding Childcare) 2020/21 19+ STUDENTS

Application and Awarding Process

Eligibility

Applications will be assessed, in the order in which they are received and processed as outlined in the published Information Sheet. The application is assessed using the assessment section on the back of the application form and is based on household income and personal circumstances. Assessment of applications will start from 3rd August 2020. All applications received by 15th August 2020 will be assessed for eligibility. The College cannot guarantee applications received after this date will be assessed. Students are only eligible if they are;

- Aged 19+ and not in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan

These are awarded to:

- Students who are living **in the parental home** and can provide evidence of **personal** income (defined as reaching an upper limit of £30,000).
- Students who are living **independently** or with a spouse/partner and can provide evidence of low **household** income (defined as reaching an upper limit of £36,000)

Evidence of student or household income **MUST** be submitted to allow the application to be processed.

Funds are available to support transport, equipment, uniform and any other course related costs the students may need assistance, as long as eligibility criteria is met. Costs not supported by the bursary include those associated with enrichment activities, gym membership etc. Assistance is assessed on an individual basis.

Evidence of income

- P60 or latest monthly payslip or 4 most recent weekly payslips.
- Full copy (totalling 6 pages) of the household's Tax Credit Award notice for 2019/20
- Evidence of being in receipt of one of the following benefits on 1st July of the previous academic year:
 - Job Seekers Allowance (JSA);
 - Employment Support Allowance (ESA);
 - Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
 - Income Support (IS).
 - Universal Credit (UC)
 - Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Evidence of income e.g. audited accounts for self-employed people, bank statements for child maintenance payments (if this is your only source of income).

Adult Discretionary Support Funds will be awarded to assist students who face genuine financial barriers to staying in education.

Adult Discretionary Support Funds will be awarded based on individual assessment and are awarded on a sliding scale percentage of contribution, depending on the household income.

Adult Discretionary Support Fund applications will not be assessed without the inclusion of the correct evidence. Applications must also have a signature for the student/parent/partner/spouse declaration section.

Where a student applying for Adult Discretionary Support Fund requests travel allowance, this will be calculated based on the number of days attending and the length of their course (Appendix 7). The rates indicated are based on the distance in miles between the student's home and the college, and not to-and-from journeys.

Where a student is awarded support for the cost of equipment, as appropriate Yeovil College can purchase the equipment on the student's behalf. In some circumstances the student may be asked to purchase the equipment and Yeovil College will reimburse the cost to the person who paid on production of a correct receipt. The student will be required to return any equipment if they withdraw/are excluded from college before the end of the course.

Students who are successfully awarded an Adult Discretionary Support Fund Award are able to make further financial requests throughout the year if there are additional costs for their programme of study, however, the College cannot guarantee any additional awards.

Students will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing following assessment indicating how and when they will receive their award if eligible.

Funds will be awarded in ten monthly payments paid on the dates listed in Appendix 8 and will be conditional on the student meeting expected standards:

- Attendance of at least 90% (unless there are exceptional medical or other extenuating circumstances).
- Behaviour which meets the Respect at College Policy.

ADULT DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT FUND PROCEDURE for CHILDCARE 2020/21 19+ STUDENTS

Application and Awarding Process

Eligibility

- Aged 19+ and not in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan

Applications will be assessed, in the order in which they are received and processed. The application is assessed using the assessment section on the back of the application form and is based on household income and personal circumstances. The closing date for receipt of applications will be 25th September 2020 after which assessment will take place.

Adult Discretionary Support Funds for Childcare

These are awarded to:

- Those students who have successfully qualified for the Adult Discretionary Support Fund. The percentage awarded rules the percentage of childcare allowance payable.

Evidence of student or household income already submitted with a bursary application can be used for childcare assessment.

Other evidence required:

- Child Benefit letter.
- Child-minder's/Pre-School/Nursery Name and Ofsted number.
- Child-minder's/Pre-School/Nursery fees list/hourly rate.

Financial assistance for childcare is from a finite pot and will be a contribution towards costs and paid out in amounts based on the number of applications received for 2020/21 and proportional to childcare requirements.

Payment is only made for childcare sessions booked during timetabled lessons, however, travel time to and from childcare providers is accepted and included.

The student will receive confirmation of their eligibility for a contribution to Childcare following their enrolment. They will be notified of the amount of childcare contribution by the end of the first term.

The college will liaise directly with the student.

Funds will be awarded in nine monthly payments paid on the dates listed in Appendix 8 (excluding September) and will be conditional on the student meeting expected standards:

- Attendance of at least 90% (unless there are exceptional medical or other extenuating circumstances).
- Behaviour which meets the Respect at College Policy.

ADVANCED LEARNER LOANS BURSARY

Application and Awarding Process

Eligibility

Applications will be assessed following enrolment, in the order in which they are received and processed as outlined in the published Information Sheet. The application is assessed using the Assessment section on the back of the application form and is based on confirmation of an approved loan from SLC, household income and personal circumstances.

Priority applicants for the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund are students who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable as a result of:

- Having a learning difficulty and/or disability.
- Having a medical condition.
- Being ex-military personnel.
- Being a parent with childcare responsibilities who needs additional help with childcare costs.
- An emergency short-term financial need (a student may be at risk of withdrawing from learning without emergency support).
- Having a loan approved by SLC – verification will be required.

To meet its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, the College will prioritise support for learners with disabilities who make timely applications to the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund.

The Advanced Learner loan bursary can be assessed against household income

- Students who are living **in the parental home** and can provide evidence of low **personal** income (defined as reaching an upper limit of £30,000).
- Students who are living **independently** or with a spouse/partner and can provide evidence of low **household** income (defined as reaching an upper limit of £36,000).

Evidence of student or household income **MUST** be submitted to allow the application to be processed.

Evidence of Income

- P60 or latest monthly payslip or 4 most recent weekly payslips.
- Full copy (totalling 6 pages) of the household's Tax Credit Award notice for 2019/20
- Evidence of being in receipt of one of the following benefits on 1st July of the previous academic year:
 - Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
 - Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
 - Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
 - Income Support (IS)
 - Universal Credit (UC)
 - Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Evidence of income e.g. audited accounts for self-employed people, bank statements or child maintenance payments (if this is your only source of income).

Students who are in receipt of other state funding to support their study will not be eligible for Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund support.

Where Early Years Funding is available, the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund will only meet additional costs required for the student to attend timetabled classes. Exceptional circumstances will be considered if funds are available.

Eligibility for Funding for Advanced Learner Loans Childcare

These are awarded to:

- Those students who have successfully qualified for the Advanced Learner Loan bursary allowance. The percentage awarded rules the percentage of childcare allowance payable.

Evidence of student or household income already submitted with the bursary application can be used for childcare assessment.

Other evidence required:

- Child Benefit letter.
- Child-minder's/Pre-School/Nursery Name and Ofsted number.
- Child-minder's/Pre-School/Nursery fees list/hourly rate.

Payment is only made for childcare sessions booked during timetabled lessons, however, travel time to and from childcare providers is accepted and included.

The student will receive confirmation of their eligibility for a contribution to Childcare following their enrolment. They will be notified of the amount of childcare contribution by the end of the first term.

The college will liaise directly with the student.

Funds will be awarded in nine monthly payments paid on the dates listed in Appendix 8 (excluding September) and will be conditional on the student meeting expected standards:

- Attendance of at least 90% (unless there are exceptional medical or other extenuating circumstances).
- Behaviour which meets the Respect at College Policy.

CARE TO LEARN PROCEDURE 2020/21

The Care to Learn Scheme can help with childcare costs for students who are studying and under the age of 20. Students must be aged under 20 at the start of their course. The scheme is available for publicly funded courses in England.

Students can receive up to £160 per child per week (if you live outside London), and can help with childcare, including deposit and registration fees, a childcare taster session for up to 5 days, keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays and taking your child to their childcare provider.

Eligibility

Successful recipients must be a parent under 20 at the start of their course, the main carer for their child, residing in England either as a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area country.

Care to Learn is only available for publicly-funded courses in England. This includes courses that take place in colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning.

To qualify, your childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted and can be a childminder, preschool, playgroup, day nursery or out of school club

Students on an apprenticeship or higher education programme are not eligible for Care to Learn.

Assessment and Awarding Process:

Students must apply direct to Care to Learn. The College can provide assistance in completing the Care to Learn form. It is the students' responsibility to ensure their Care to Learn application is complete and sent off.

Monitoring while on programme:

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before they can be paid the college will confirm if a student is attending their course, as requested by the Learner Support Agency.

Travel payments go direct to college – the college will reimburse the student via BACS payment.

Payments will end when:

- A student stops attending their course.
- A student reaches the end of their course.
- A student's child stops attending childcare.

FREE MEALS 2020/21 16 - 19 STUDENTS

Application and Awarding Process

Applications will be assessed, in the order in which they are received. The application is assessed using the Application for Financial Assistance Form and is based on household income and personal circumstances. Assessment of applications will start from 3rd August 2020. All applications received by 14th August 2020 will be assessed for eligibility. The College cannot guarantee applications received after this date will be assessed.

Eligibility

The value of the free meals for 2020/21 is set at £2.41 (from government advice, and may be subject to change without notice).

Students must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31st August 2020 or aged 19 and continuing on a study programme started in a previous academic year to be eligible for a free meal in the 2020 to 2021 academic year. Students who turn 19 during their study programme will remain eligible for a free meal until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 or to the end of their study programme, whichever is sooner.

Students aged between 19 and 24 who are subject to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and ESF students aged between 16 and 18 on 31st August 2020 are also entitled to a free meal while attending their provision if they meet the eligibility criteria.

The following groups of student are not eligible for a free meal:

- Students aged between 14 and 16 (these students are already covered by different provision).
- Students aged 19 or over at the start of their study programme, unless they have an EHCP or are a 19 year old continuer.
- Apprentices, including those with an LDA or EHCP.

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. For the purposes of eligibility for free meals, 'disadvantage' is defined by the students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support (IS).
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA).
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC.
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit (UC) with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa.

Students will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing following assessment indicating how and when they will receive their award if eligible.

Provision of Free Meals

The College will make provision for free meals to eligible students (ie those who are in receipt of the qualifying benefits and who make a successful application for free meals) for each day that the student attends their study programme. Off-site provision will be catered for should students be on work placement outside the college environment.

**TRAVEL ALLOWANCE CALCULATIONS 2020/21
ADULT DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT FUNDS**

Mileage is calculated from the students home stated address to Yeovil College using postcodes and AA Route Planner for standardisation.

DISTANCE HOME TO COLLEGE	DAYS PER WEEK AT COLLEGE				
	1	2	3	4	5
3-5 miles	£2	£4	£6	£8	£10
5-13 miles	£4	£8	£12	£16	£20
13-20 miles	£6	£12	£18	£20	£22
20-25 miles	£8	£16	£22	£24	£26
25+ miles	£10	£18	£24	£26	£28

PAYMENT DATES**Payment in arrears based on previous month's attendance**

Payment 1	1 st September 2020
Payment 2	1 st October 2020
Payment 3	2 nd November 2020
Payment 4	1 st December 2020
Payment 5	4 th January 2021
Payment 6	1 st February 2021
Payment 7	1 st March 2021
Payment 8	1 st April 2021
Payment 9	3 rd May 2021
Payment 10	1 st June 2021