

POLICY ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF STUDENT SUPPORT FUNDS



PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Bursary Support Funds are allocated by the Educational Funding Agency (EFA) and Adult Discretionary Support Funds are allocated by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to provide additional support to learners 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:

- 16 - 19 Guaranteed Bursary (EFA)
- 16 - 19 Discretionary Bursary (EFA)
- 19+ Adult Discretionary Learner Support including Childcare (AEB)
- Advanced Learner Loans Bursary (SFA)
- Free Meals (within the 16-19 categories) (EFA)

SCOPE

The Bursary Support Funds support 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 *EFA Funding Guidance 2016/17 Funding Regulations*.

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 *SFA Agency Funding Rules 2016/17*.

The Advanced Learner Loans Bursary supports students who are studying a course funded by an Advanced Learner Loan.

Free Meals advice is set by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and cites colleges' requirement to provide free meals to disadvantaged 16 to 18 year old students 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: Departmental advice for further education funded institutions*.

The 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 learners participating in Higher Education courses.

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

The fund responsibility 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 EFA and SFA Funding Guidance and College Policies and Procedures.

All applications will be considered on a first come, first served basis. Being eligible does not guarantee funding.

Financial assistance is awarded for the duration of the student's course subject to the continuing availability of funds and there being no change in income available to the student. A financial assessment will be carried out each year.

Monitoring whilst on programme

The Bursary scheduled monthly payments will be conditional on the student meeting expected standards:

- Attendance of at least 80% (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, payments may be suspended. Students have the right to appeal against any non-payment through their tutor.


Appeals

The College operates an appeals process against assessment and non-payment decisions. Students who wish to appeal against an assessment decision can do so in writing to the Senior Student and Customer Services Advisor. The assessment appeal will be investigated and a decision confirmed by email within 5 working days.

Students who wish to appeal against a non-payment decision relating to attendance/behaviour can do so by contacting their tutor. Details of any special circumstances which apply will be discussed with the Senior Student and Customer Services Advisor and a decision confirmed by email within 5 working days.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS, DEFINITIONS

- Financial Support Information Sheet 2016/17
- Application Form for Financial Assistance 2016/17
- Appendix 1 – Bursary Support Fund Procedure 2016/17
- Appendix 2 – Adult Discretionary Support Fund Procedure 2016/17
- Appendix 3 – Adult Discretionary Support Fund Procedure for Childcare 2016/17
- Appendix 4 – 24+ Adult Learner Loan Bursary Fund 2016/17
- Appendix 5 – Care To Learn Procedure 2016/17
- Appendix 6 – Free Meals Procedure 2016/17
- Appendix 7 – Travel Allowance Calculations 2016/17
- Appendix 8 – Payment Dates 2016/17

Policy Review				
Owner	Position	Approved by SMT	Approval date	Review date
Emma Cox	Vice Principal Finance & Resources	Signed: 	18.04.17	April 2017 for publication July

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	-	N

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	Negative impact	Positive impact	Evidence
Age Disability Gender (incl. Transgender) Race (incl. Gypsy & Traveller) Religion or belief Sex Sexual orientation Marriage & civil partnership Pregnancy & maternity Other groups (see guidance)			
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: Jennie Ballam		Position: Student & Customer Services Manager	Date: 17/05/16
Reviewed by Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity Group:			Date:
Comments from Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity Group Review:			

BURSARY SUPPORT FUND PROCEDURE 2016/2017 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 given out to students. The application is assessed using the Assessment Sheet and is based on household income and personal circumstances.

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. Assistance is assessed on an individual basis.

1. Guaranteed Bursary Support Funds

Eligibility

These are awarded to:

- Children in care.
- Care leavers.
- 16-19 students in receipt of income support or Universal Credit in their own name.
- Students in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

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

A Guaranteed Bursary of £1200 will be awarded in ten payments paid on the 2016/17 dates listed in Appendix 4.

A student who qualifies for a County Ticket and/or course kit/uniform will have this deducted from their Guaranteed Bursary total.

2. Discretionary Bursary Support Funds

Eligibility

These are awarded to:

- Students aged 16-19 who can provide evidence of household income below £30,000.

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

Students aged 16-19 who live more than 3 miles from Yeovil College and who are applying for a County Ticket for their transport costs, must submit the application form for the Somerset County Ticket with their bursary application.

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.

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. Assistance is assessed on an individual basis.

Evidence of income:

- Copy of parent(s)' and/or partner's P60 (or evidence of current income for the most recent 3 months).
- Full copy (totalling 6 pages) of the household's Tax Credit Award notice for 2016/17.
- 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
 - 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. Applications must also have a signature for the student/parent declaration section.

Students will be notified of the outcome of their application by email or letter within 5 working days, also indicating how and when they will receive their award.

Where a current student has applied for transport and is eligible for 2016/17, Yeovil College will purchase the County Ticket and make it available for the student to collect from the Student and Customer Services Team prior to the start of the Autumn Term. The student will be required to return their ticket if they withdraw/are excluded from college before the end of the course.

Where a student is awarded support for the cost of equipment, Yeovil College can purchase the equipment. In some circumstances the students 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.

LEARNER SUPPORT FUND PROCEDURE (Excluding Childcare) 2016/17 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 Sheet and is based on household income and personal circumstances. Students are only eligible if they are;

- Aged 20+ and not in receipt of a Student Loan

These are awarded to:

- Students who are living **in the parental home** and can provide evidence of **personal** income (defined as reaching a 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. Assistance is assessed on an individual basis.

Evidence of income

- P60 (or other evidence of current income)
- Full copy (totalling 6 pages) of the household's Tax Credit Award notice for 2016/17
- Evidence of 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
 - 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).

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

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

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

Where a student applying for a Learner Support Fund requests travel allowance, this will be calculated based on the number of days attending and the length of their course (Appendix 6). 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, Yeovil College can purchase the equipment or in some circumstances the student can 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 Learner Support Fund Award bursary are able to make further financial requests throughout the year if there are additional costs for their programme of study.

Students will be notified of the outcome of their application by letter within 5 working days, also indicating how and when they will receive their award.

Monies will be awarded in ten monthly payments paid on the dates listed in Appendix 4 and will be conditional on the student meeting expected standards:

- Attendance of at least 80% (unless there are exceptional medical or other extenuating circumstances).
- Behaviour which meets the Respect at College Policy.

19+ LEARNER SUPPORT FUND PROCEDURE for CHILDCARE 2016/17**Application and Awarding Process**Eligibility

- Aged 19+ and not in receipt of a Student Loan

Applications will be assessed, in the order in which they are received and processed. The application is assessed using the Assessment Sheet and is based on household income and personal circumstances.

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 applied for childcare assessment.

Other evidence required:

- Child Benefit letter.
- Child-minder's/Pre-School/Nursery Ofsted number.
- Child-minder's/Pre-School/Nursery fees list/hourly rate.
- Copy of student's timetable (once known).

Financial assistance for childcare is from a finite pot and will be a contribution towards costs and paid out in equal amounts based on the number of applications received for 2016/17

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.

A copy of this contribution letter will also be sent to the relevant childcare provider.

The College will liaise directly with the childcare provider for payment of relevant childcare contribution. Monies are paid based on attendance. Monies will be paid to the childcare provider by BACS on receipt of an invoice.

ADVANCED LEARNER LOANS BURSARY

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 Sheet and is based on household income and personal circumstances.

Priority applicants for the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund are learners 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 learner 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 other evidence of current income)
- Full copy (totalling 6 pages) of the household's Tax Credit Award notice for 2016/2017
- Evidence of 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
 - 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 e.g. enrolled on JCP courses, will not be eligible for Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund support.

Where Early Years Funding is available, the Advanced Learner Bursary Fund will only meet additional costs required for the learner to attend time-tabled 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 applied for childcare assessment.

Other evidence required:

- Child Benefit letter.
- Child-minder's/Pre-School/Nursery Ofsted number.
- Child-minder's/Pre-School/Nursery fees list/hourly rate.
- Copy of student's timetable (once known).

Payment is only made for childcare sessions booked during timetabled lessons. 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.

A copy of this letter will also be sent to the relevant childcare provider.

The College will liaise directly with the childcare provider for payment of relevant childcare fees. Monies are paid based on attendance and in arrears. Monies will be paid to the childcare provider by BACS on receipt of an invoice.

CARE TO LEARN PROCEDURE 2016/17

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 a cheque.

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 2016/17 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.

Eligibility

The value of the free meals for 2016/17 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 31 August 2016 to be eligible for a free meal in the 2016 to 2017 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 25 who are subject to a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) and ESF students aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2016 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 LDA or EHC Plan.
- Apprentices, including those with an LDA or EHC Plan.

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.
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- The guarantee 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 Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- During the initial roll out of the benefit, Universal Credit.

Students will be notified of the outcome of their application by letter, also indicating how and when they will receive their award.

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 2016/17
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
3-10 miles	£2	£4	£6	£8	£10
11-20 miles	£4	£8	£12	£16	£20
21-30 miles	£6	£12	£18	£22	£22
30+ miles	£8	£16	£22	£22	£22

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

Payment 1	30 th September
Payment 2	28 th October
Payment 3	25 th November
Payment 4	16 th December
Payment 5	27 th January
Payment 6	24 th February
Payment 7	31 st March
Payment 8	28 th April
Payment 9	26 th May
Payment 10	30 th June

Learner Support Funds – Childcare**Payment in arrears based on previous month's attendance**

Will be paid after being assessed at the end of each month