



Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund Policy and Procedures 2023/2024

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1. Policy Statement

The College is committed to distributing Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund in a fair and consistent way. Funding is provided to support learners who may be vulnerable who are funded through a loan and to also support learners based on their financial needs and local circumstances.

2. Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund (ALL Bursary)

The ALL Bursary is to support those students who are on an Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) approved course at level 3 or 4, who are in receipt of a loan and who are aged 19 and over when their course starts.

The fund covers two areas;

- Financial hardship, including childcare
- Course related costs including trips, books and equipment, transport costs for getting to and from college, professional membership fees and any fees or charges due to external bodies.
- In exceptional support with domestic emergencies and emergency accommodation provided by others, or by providing items, services or cash direct to the learner. This can be in the form of a grant or repayable loan provided by you for course related costs
- Learning support for students with learning Difficulties / disabilities

3. Application Process and Documentary Evidence

3.1 ALL Bursary

The application process for funds will be open from early July and until such time as funds be used up. All applications will be considered based on the funding available.

Pay My Student

For ALL funding, including applications for travel passes, students must complete an application using the on line student support bursary service, Pay My Student. Documentary evidence is required to make an assessment of income and / or identification of being in a priority group (as laid down in the ESFA guidance). This could be pay slips, P60, proof of earning for self-employment, bank statements, Tax Credit Award Notice, Universal Credit monthly statement, proof of benefits (letters from DWP / Job Centre) this list not exhaustive.

The 'application date' will be the date the completed form is received along with all relevant documentation.

Students will also need to provide evidence to support their request e.g. College order form for kit/equipment/uniform, signed book list from tutors, compulsory trips, receipts for individual items etc.

3.2 Childcare Funds (ALL) 20+

Students can register their interest in applying for funding once they have made an application to study to the College. Funds are allocated on a strict first come first served basis. Students are asked to provide the same financial information as for the ALL Bursary but also have to provide information that the provider is Ofsted-registered (Early Years Register for children aged 0-5, Compulsory Childcare Register for 5-8 and Voluntary Childcare Register for over 8's).

3.3 Travel

Full time students who are aged 19+ and live more than one miles away from College can apply for a travel pass by following the Pay My Student system. For more information please see Travel Passes and Funds Policy and Procedures.

Students who do not wish to apply for a travel pass can apply for help towards travel costs e.g. petrol, 23p per mile per timetabled day. This cost will be capped at the cost of the cheapest ticket / pass available on public transport. Applications follow the normal ALL Bursary Fund process.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Eligibility criteria

Funding will focus on those individuals who are financially disadvantaged and who are in need of support in areas such as childcare, transport, books and equipment.

Eligibility is assessed in a few possible ways; if a student is in receipt of a means tested benefit then proof of this benefit is sufficient evidence for eligibility, or if they have a household income of less than £38,500 per annum again this would be sufficient.

Students would need to provide their most recent payslips, P60, most recent Tax Credit Award Notice, Universal Credit etc.

Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Allowance), Incapacity Benefit, Employment Support Allowance and Child Benefit are not taken into account as an income.

4.2 Exemptions

Students in the following categories are not eligible for the ALL Bursary:

- for learners whose loan has not yet been approved and they have not passed the liability point
- to cover costs and charges for items without which a learner could not complete their course
- for learner support for learners in custody or released on temporary licence

4.3 Residency Eligibility Criteria

The residency eligibility criteria are aligned to the residency criteria from the ESFA which can be found on their web page.

4.4 Refugees

Refugees are not required to meet the three year residency rule if their refugee status was confirmed in the three years prior to starting the course.

5. Allocation of payments

All full and part time ALL students aged 19+ can apply for a maximum of £1000 per person per year. Need is assessed by the Student Finance Co-ordinator. Evidence could be College order forms for kits, signed book lists from course tutors, information provided from Student Records re exam and registration fees (this list is not exhaustive). Students must supply receipts for anything purchased.

Students cannot apply for funding towards the following:

- Leisure classes
- Full or part time tuition fees where a learner does not fit into the fee remission category
- Students cannot double claim funding

In the first instances funds for kits, uniforms and trips will be transferred directly to the relevant department. Other allocations will be made via Bank Automated Credit System (BACS), and in exceptional circumstances a cash payment maybe made.

Where an attendance issue arises for a full time student (e.g. attendance falls below 90%) the MSR Procedures may be invoked. This will happen only if the issues of attendance have not managed to be addressed informally with the Progress Tutor and student. For a part time student where they do not fall under the Academic Procedures of MSR, a meeting will be set up with the Course Ledaer and Student to look at what the issues are how to resolve them. If this fails significantly for either a full or part time student then funding may be withdrawn. When funds are used to buy equipment for individuals, the equipment will remain the property of the College, this should be returned to the College when practical, taking into consideration such factors as hygiene, health and safety, and wear and tear.

6. Allocation of Childcare 20+

Students can register their interest for funding from the point of an application being made for a course. Funds are allocated on a strict first come first served basis.

Applicants should note that there is government funded support in place but where learners need to continue with employment alongside their College course, they must access all of the government support in place but can then use the ALL Childcare Funding to top up the extra costs, proof that the learner is working and what days they work will be required and this will be verified with the childcare provider.

Funding for childcare is allocated based on the maximum number of days a student is timetabled to attend the College site (September-May, inclusive of College holidays and bank holiday).

Contributions to the cost of deposits, booking or reservation fees will be considered once the learner has started their course and been on programme for the first semester.

7. Learning Support

For learners with a Learning Difficulty or Disability who require support to enable them to access their course and interview will be held with a member of the Learning Support team. Students will be asked to provide evidence of their disability i.e. EHCP.

The Head of Learning Support and Inclusion will make recommendations for reasonable adjustments that could be made to support the learner; this could include, but is not limited to;

- Learning Support Assistant in class
- Care support
- Adaptations to the course or how it is delivered
- Communicator

8. Emergency Hardship Funds

Hardship funds are one off payments for students who are facing extreme crisis e.g. Homelessness, sudden change in domestic circumstances and need for food, travel, clothing (this list is not exhaustive). These funds should be primarily allocated by the Head of Student Services, so that any other necessary support is accessed/ arranged. In the absence of the Head of Student Services, a member of the welfare or safeguarding team can allocate funding. Any student receiving support from this fund must also be immediately referred to the welfare and safeguarding team to ensure all of their needs are being addressed.

9. Appeals

Any student, who is dissatisfied with the decision made regarding the allocation of funds, may appeal in writing to the Head of Student Services within 15 term time days of receipt of letter.

The Appeals Panel will be made of a member of the Senior Leadership Team and 2 managers.

The Head of Student Services or Student Finance Co-ordinator will present the information to the panel.

The student will be informed of the decision of the Panel within 10 term time days of receipt of the letter of appeal.

10. Essential Elements

This policy and procedures will operate transparent, consistent systems, with clear criteria for eligibility, allowing funds to be targeted to those students in financial hardship within the ESFA guidelines. This is ensured by:

- Procedures / guidelines for staff, updated annually
- Staff training and development meetings

A variety of methods will be used to publicise the availability of funds, including the application procedure and appeals procedure. This includes:

- Financial information booklet – updated annually, available on line and within the Student Hub
- Admissions / offer letters
- Information from admissions tutors at interview
- Information at the point of enrolment
- Information at Induction Fair
- Posters, multi media screens etc
- College web page

11. Monitoring effectiveness

Monthly updates will be provided to the Senior Leadership Team. An annual report to SLT, Corporation and Equality and Diversity Committee will report on funds spent and identify links between financial support and retention and achievement.

12. Confidentiality, data protection and retention

All personal and sensitive information will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality.

The Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are not only restrictions on disclosure of information about the College, they are bound by a common law duty of confidentiality. This duty prevents the College from releasing information about students or other stakeholders, without their consent. This duty applies to manual records as well as information held on computers.

Information which must be treated as confidential includes the names and addresses of students and any other information about them which is not publicly known, i.e. “personal data”. Accordingly, to ensure that the College does not breach its duty, no information, even if it only exists in printed form, should be disclosed unless all the relevant procedures have been followed.

All documents are held for the assessment of eligibility to the fund and audit purposes only. All information will be stored securely and treated sensitively. All documents will be kept by the College for 6 years.

13. Administration of the Fund

There can be no virement between 16-18, ALL Bursary funds and dLSF.

Administration of the fund is capped at 5% of the value of the spend of the 23/24 allocation.

14. Policy Update

The procedures will be reviewed annually in line with the release of the ESFA funding guidance and are the responsibility of the Head of Student Services and Student Finance Co-ordinator.

15. Other Sources of Funding

The College operates or has links to a number of other sources of funding. For further details of any of the funds listed below please contact the Student Information team.

- Care to Learn
- Travel Passes & Funds Policy and Procedure
- Hardship Fund
- 16-19 Bursary Fund
- 19+ Learner Support Fund
- Professional and Career Development Loan
- Charitable Organisations e.g. Pinecone Trust