

Student Financial Support Funds 2018-19 Policy

Policy Aim

Leeds City College is committed to promoting the practice of equality and social mobility by ensuring student financial support funds are made available to assist disadvantaged students, and those who are facing financial hardship with course-related costs, in order to overcome barriers which may prevent them from taking part in or continuing in learning and accessing educational, and progression opportunities.

The college is also committed to promoting the safeguarding and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults, including providing targeted support to those who are most in need through the student funds specified, ensuring that students have access to opportunities and the support they require to continue in learning and progress.

This policy describes the student funds available to Further Education students. Higher Education student financial support is outlined in the college's Access Agreement.

The policy should be read alongside the procedures available on departmental pages which outline a number of related processes.

Applies to:

- Keighley College
- Leeds City College
- Leeds College of Music (delete as appropriate)
- White Rose Academies Trust (delete as appropriate)



LEEDS CITY
COLLEGE



KEIGHLEY
COLLEGE

CHANGE CONTROL

Version:	Version 1.3 (June 2018)	
Approved by:	Governing Board	
Date approved:	1st August 2018	
Name of author:	Andrea Cowans	
Name of responsible committee:	DELT	
Related policies: (list)	Admissions	
Equality impact assessment completed	Date:	
	Assessment type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full <input type="checkbox"/> Part <input type="checkbox"/> Not required	
Policy will be communicated via:	College Website, Intranet, staff and student induction, staff and student training, employer handbook, contracts and service specifications	
Next review date:	July 2019	

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

Leeds City College promotes equality, diversity, inclusion and social mobility by using student financial support funds to remove financial barriers to learning, which may prevent students from enrolling, fully participating, completing and progressing from courses. We recognise the positive impact of education on the lives of our students and promote the full participation in course related activities and college enrichment programmes.

2. POLICY AIMS

2.1. This policy seeks to ensure that:

- Student funds are distributed in accordance with the regulations and guidelines laid out by funding agencies;
- Administration of student financial support funds meet the needs of students and remove financial barriers to learning;
- Systems are in place to administer, record and monitor funds, ensuring that funds are used for their intended purposes.

3. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. Leeds City College receives allocations of funding annually to provide financial support for Further Education students from ESFA. Leeds City College administers the funds received from ESFA and distributes them to provide financial support in order to overcome barriers, which may prevent beneficiaries from taking part in or continuing in learning and accessing educational opportunities.

3.2. This policy covers the following student financial support funds, which are available to eligible students. Students who apply for any of the funds will be assessed individually and awarded support based on their individual financial need. See Appendix 1.

3.2.1.16-18 year old students (or with EHCP)

- 16-19 Discretionary Bursary;
- Free College Meals;
- Care to Learn;
- 16-19 Guaranteed/Vulnerable Bursary.

3.2.2.19+ students

- 19+ Discretionary Learner Support;
- 20+ Childcare - (part of 19+ Discretionary Learner Support);
- Advanced Learner Loans Bursary;
- 20+ Childcare - (Advanced Learner Loans Bursary).

3.3. The purpose of the funds is to:

- Assist eligible students to take part in or continue in learning. Students in receipt of funds are encouraged, supported and expected to attend all of their classes (including attending English and mathematics);
- Support retention and progression enabling students to achieve qualifications and progress into further learning, work or apprenticeships.

4. MAIN ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

4.1. The college provides two forms of financial support to students.

- 4.1.1 Leeds City College ESFA student funds will provide support for travel, childcare and meals in accordance with the terms set out in this policy;
- 4.1.2 Support for equipment, uniform, books, professional membership fees, educational or employability related visits, enrichment activities and any other course-related costs may also be available. 16-19 year-old and 19+ AEB students assessed as eligible for student funds support may be funded by curriculum departments. Advanced Learning Loan students will be funded through the learner support funds.

4.2. Students must satisfy all of the following criteria for access to Student Funds:

- A “home student” who meets the residency requirements;
- Meet the age requirement of the fund;
- Be enrolled on an approved Government funded programme (ESFA, ESF, publicly funded, traineeship programme);
- Be on a full-time course and or substantial part-time course (5 hours and above including any mandatory placements);
- Be in receipt of income assessed state benefits/ tax credits (including Universal Credits) or have an annual gross household income of £24,000 or below. For household incomes between £24,001 and £26,000 travel help only;
- To qualify for help with travel costs, a student must live 1.5 miles or over from their campus of their study. The student’s home address is used and walking routes calculated on Google Maps. Exceptional circumstances will be considered individually.

4.3. The college reserves the right to apply discretion to ensure that individual students’ needs and personal circumstances are taken into account when decisions are made.

4.4. Curriculum departments will publish a curriculum funds statement outlining support available for kit, equipment, uniform, visits and trips or other course related costs for students in individual course areas. The curriculum funds have the same eligibility criteria as the main ESFA funds. Individual support for students will be supplemented with departmental resources.

Curriculum departments should use LSF/Bursary eligibility as an indicator when assessing student support needs.

The ESFA funding rules state that essential kit and equipment must be provided by curriculum departments as part of the course offer.

4.5. In addition to the college administered funds, students can apply for Care to Learn (childcare costs for under 20 year olds) and Guaranteed / Vulnerable bursary (weekly payments to bank accounts for students aged 16, 17 or 18 at the start of the course who are a child looked after by the Local Authority, or are Care Leavers, or are in receipt of Income Support or Employment Support Allowance and Personal Independence Allowance in their own right).

5. TERMS AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. Leeds City College strives to achieve the most effective use of ESFA funding to support the maximum number of eligible students. Students with a household income below £26,000 will be eligible to apply for the travel elements of the funds. A student who has an

annual gross household income of £24,000 or below will be eligible to apply for any other elements of the funds as applicable.

- 5.2. Where a student is aged 19 or over on 31st August 2018 and is dependent on another adult in one household, awards may be made on a discretionary basis. Due to the limited nature of the fund, payments are not guaranteed. This fund provides help for students from low income households. Applications are income assessed, based on the supporting evidence submitted with the application. Refer to Appendix 2 for details of income levels and documents which are accepted as proof of income and household circumstances.
- 5.3. Where a student is aged 23 or over, they will be assessed on their own income even if they are living within a household.
- 5.4. The guiding principle for distributing the funds is to provide support in the form of goods or services including travel passes, food from college catering outlets, sanitary protection and childcare. These are the factors identified as barriers to learning by students. In some exceptional circumstances, such as a safeguarding risk, and at the college's discretion, students may be paid by BACS payment (money direct to students' bank account). There is a maximum limit to such payments.
- 5.5. The effective use of the funds will be monitored and evaluated through:
 - Internal audit – annual;
 - ESFA audit and annual returns;
 - Student focus groups and feedback;
 - Student survey;
 - Effectiveness of forecasting and budgeting monitored in performance review;
 - Feedback from and consultation with staff;
 - Annual review of this policy.
- 5.6. An emergency fund will be made available to provide financial support to students who need short term help or face crises such as providing a student with bus pass to get home. In these exceptional cases the fund use will be recorded on student records, however depending on circumstances, a full application may not be deemed necessary or appropriate.
- 5.7. The college will ensure effective management and systems of financial control are in place, funds are used for intended purposes and compliance with the ESFA guidelines. A student will only be awarded student financial support funds if they have provided a completed application form and the required evidence that proves their eligibility for the relevant fund. Support will be provided from the date a fully completed application form and supporting evidence as required is received by the Student Funds team. Each application to the fund will be individually assessed.
- 5.8. Eligibility for student financial support does not give students an automatic entitlement to receive it. Students will be made aware that funding is limited and offered on a first come first served basis and during the year if it is necessary to introduce an application deadline, the date will be published.
- 5.9. The college will promote financial support funds using a range of methods including via school liaison activities, college website, marketing material and internal communication with students. The College will make student financial support funds information accessible for students to clarify the eligibility criteria and the application processes to

enable students to fulfil their responsibility regarding the collection, completion and return of application forms with the appropriate required evidence and documentation.

5.10. Students will be advised of the outcome of their application within 20 working days. The college will reserve the right to recover funds (where appropriate) including equipment and travel passes from any student who withdraws from college or those who made a false application. Students are expected, encouraged and supported to attend 100% of all their classes. This includes English and maths classes, work placement and any timetabled events. The college will monitor student attendance and attitude to learning and may make changes to the amount of financial support to ensure it is used effectively. A minimum attendance of 90% is required to continue receiving support, however the college will apply discretion to promote retention and accommodate students' individual needs.

5.11. Eligibility for funds is determined by assessment of income against criteria outlined in the application procedure. College staff are trained to make assessments and sign the application form to indicate that evidence has been seen.

5.10. The college will work with internal and external professionals to identify and support students who are eligible for Guaranteed/ Vulnerable Bursary and Care to Learn, maximizing uptake of these. Children looked after are eligible for travel and meal awards in addition to the Guaranteed /Vulnerable Bursary.

6. APPEALS

All awards are made in accordance with the terms of this policy. If a student disagrees with the award decision the process to challenge this is:

- Students should discuss their application with their department's administrative staff and / or their coaching or personal tutor.
- If a student feels an unfair decision has been made, they should state their reasons in writing to the Student Funds manager, who will review the application.
- The final stage of appeal is in writing to the Director of Student Life who will make a final decision.

7. RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for this policy rests with the Director of Student Life and the Student Funds Manager is responsible for its implementation.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read with reference to the following documents available of the staff intranet or from the Student Funds team:

- Student Funds FAQ
- Student Funds Processes
- Student Funds application form

9. WHO WILL NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY

The following stakeholders need to know about this policy:

- Students, parents and carers, local authority, government agencies: Information for

students and the general public about the Student Funds will be provided on the college website, prospectus, student intranet, leaflets, posters and during admissions process

- Heads of department, coaching tutors, curriculum administrators, Student Life teams, MIS and finance managers, Directors and Executive Leadership Team: All documents are available on the staff intranet (departmental pages). Staff briefings will be held at key points of the year including training sessions. Annual consultation on policy.

10. REVIEW

The Student Financial Support Funds 2018-19 Policy will be reviewed biannually and the next review date is January 2019. A new policy will be published annually.

11. APPENDIX 1; Award details

12. APPENDIX 2; 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund - Assessing Household Income

Note: Following AEB changes, the Policy has been amended for 19+ students.

The Adult and Community learning offer includes a flexible course which supports making claims for Universal Credits including digital literacy. For further information about Universal Credits, contact Allison Long at Job Centre Plus, Tel: 0845 604 3719.

APPENDICES

APPENIDX 1. Award details

All awards apply to students aged 16-19 and students aged 19+, unless otherwise stated.

Award	Details
1. Travel Passes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible students will be issued with the most cost effective travel pass available. In the vast majority of cases this will be an electronic annual First bus M ticket or travel pass. Exceptions to this will be considered individually. Travel costs will be capped at £800 pa for those who travel from outside West Yorkshire and/ or unable to use the usual local public transports. • A student must live 1.5 miles away from their campus of your study, walking distance as worked out on Google Maps. • Support towards petrol and parking is not provided. • A student will be provided with smart code (electronic tickets) to ensure best value for money and efficient processes. However one of the following will be available for students with specific reasons for not using the electronic ticket: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ First paper pass. ➤ Arriva travel card ➤ TransDev travel card ➤ Exceptional Travel - Metro travel voucher in exceptional cases only and up to £700 (equivalent to 8 x monthly Metro tickets). Exceptional cases to be assessed according to individual circumstances by the Student Funds team and numbers may be restricted). ➤ Other exceptional cases – individually assessed by the central team, provision for other arrangements such as taxi may be considered with payment by BACS to the company. This is only up £700. • Cash or bank payment for travel is not be available.
2. Meals and subsistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible students can access meals at college food service outlets using the cashless meal card. • Only students who attend two sessions or more spanning a meal break per day or who attend college 5 hours or more per day are eligible for food. • A cashless meal card is provided to spend up to £3 for each day the student is required to attend college during term time. • Food service outlets will provide a meal deal to the value of £3. Students may choose from other food items, however these must have nutritional value and card will exclude sweets, chocolate, snacks and fizzy drinks. • Supermarket vouchers are available for students on work placement to an equivalent of £3 for each day. These must be requested by tutors at least 2 weeks prior to the start of the placement to allow for administration and issue.

<p>3. Equipment and visits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible students can be supported with course related books, kit, equipment, uniforms, protective clothing, educational or employability related visits, co-curricular activities and any other relevant course-related costs. • These costs are covered directly by curriculum departments for students aged 16-19 and 19+ (AEB). • Departments will be provided with information about which students are eligible for the funds • Departments will provide a list of items included to the Student Funds team by 1st August of the academic year, and the information will be made available to students to ensure transparency of processes. This information will be used to allocate funds to students in receipt of Advanced Learning Loan bursary. • Departments will distribute equipment, etc. in a timely manner to ensure no student is disadvantaged or prevented from participating fully in the course. • Where appropriate departments may part fund items or loan items to students. • Students in receipt of Advanced Learning Loans will be considered for equipment and related costs from the dedicated Advanced Learner Loan Bursary fund.
<p>4. Emergency Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Emergency Fund is short term and in place to assist students experiencing a sudden, unexpected and emergency situation, which may impact on their studies. This is also to promote the safeguarding and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults. • See the Student Fund - Emergency Fund Procedure 2018/9 for detailed information.
<p>5. Hardship Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeds City College Hardship Fund is in place to assist students who are experiencing exceptional hardship or a domestic emergency. The funds are limited and awards are made within the constraints of the budget available. • Hardship Funds are assessed by the Welfare Advisers. • See the Student Fund - Hardship Fund Procedure 2018/9 for detailed information.
<p>6. Guaranteed/ Vulnerable Bursary (16-19 year olds only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed /Vulnerable Bursary is an entitlement for Students aged 16,17 or 18 at the 31st August 2018 who are a child looked after by the Local Authority, or • A Care Leavers, or are in receipt of Income Support or Employment Support Allowance and Personal Independence Allowance in their own right. • The bursary, to a maximum of £1200 pa, is paid in addition to other Student Fund awards • Payments are made on a weekly basis to student bank accounts by BACS. • Additional evidence is required to be collected and retained • The college will seek to identify and encourage application to the Guaranteed /Vulnerable Bursary by all eligible students.

<p>7. Childcare – Care to learn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who are under 20 years of age are provided with assistance to apply for the Care to Learn Scheme to cover childcare costs • The college will seek to identify and encourage application to the Care to Learn Scheme by all eligible students.
<p>8. Childcare – Age 20+ and Advanced Learning Loan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who are over 20 years of age can apply for assistance with childcare costs for their timetabled classes on a term-time only basis using the childcare application form. • Leeds City College will work with childcare providers who are registered and signed our service level agreement to support students with their childcare arrangements, and funding. • Students must use the free early education entitlement (FEEE) for childcare in the first instance • There is a limited fund available, which is allocated early. Not all eligible students will be awarded support with childcare. • Detailed childcare support processes are set out. Childcare is high cost support and requires contractual arrangements to be in place between childcare providers and the college • Students must not assume childcare will be awarded, and any costs incurred are the responsibility of the student unless there is written agreement from the Student Funds team that payment will be made. • Some childcare funding will be retained for students enrolling during the academic year. • See the childcare processes 2018/9 for detailed information including priorities for childcare support, maximum amount per students. There are restrictions on the fund, and each case is assessed individually.
<p>9. Fees</p>	<p>In exceptional circumstances, LSF will pay up to 75% of the published fees for disadvantaged students who are not eligible for loans or fee waivers. Only asylum seekers can receive 100% of fees. Note – the maximum fee is based on 50% of the LARS unweighted value.</p>

APPENDIX 2. 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund - Assessing Household Income

When making decisions about awarding 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Funds, we will take into account the availability of other financial support for learners.

Awards can be made to students in the following circumstances:

- Students in receipt of income assessed state benefits, or named on the evidence as a dependant of a person receiving such benefits.
- Students living in a household with a gross annual income of £24,000 or less per year for a family with dependent children or couples.
- Students with a gross annual income of £15,000 or less per year if a single person living independently.
- Students with an annual gross income of £7,500 or less per year if single, not living independently but within a household such as with parents, carers, relatives or friends.
- Students, who do not have their own income, must demonstrate how they are being financially supported. If they are living in a household, they are expected to provide evidence of the household income.
- If a student appears to be living on nil income, it is unlikely that they will be able to sustain themselves on the course. It is important that they seek advice about how they will support their day to day living costs while studying. It is beyond the scope of the fund to support students' living costs. When choosing to study, the individual needs to consider if they have made reasonable provision for their living costs, either through entitlement to benefits, employment or support from the household they are part of.

The following are accepted as proof of income and household circumstances for assessing applications for financial support:

- Current Tax Credit Award Notice (Full letter with all pages);
- Current Universal Credit Notice (Full letter with all pages);
- Current (income assessed) Benefit Claim letter – dated within the last 3 months;
- Letter from Benefit Agency confirming receipt of benefit – dated within the last 3 months;
- Letter from Local Authority confirming Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit – dated within the last 3 months;
- Bank statements indicating regular payments from the Benefits Agency;
- Wage slips (minimum of 2 monthly/8 weekly payslips);
- Proof of recent tax return if self-employed;
- Other evidence may be requested to establish proof of income and household circumstances.