

Policy/Procedure/Guideline Review

Policy/Procedure/ Guideline:	Policy for the Distribution of College Bursary Funds
Senior Manager Responsible:	Associate Principal – Quality/LAL
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Changes Made:	Inclusion of LAL & aligned with standard policy format. Reviewed and updated to take account of any changes in Government policy. More detailed sections on the support available and how it is distributed. Specific reference of ALS for EHCP transport support and Advanced Learner Loan students

Policy for the Distribution of College Bursary Funds

1. Introduction

Nelson and Colne College, including Lancashire Adult Learning, receives allocations of funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (formally the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Education Funding Agency (EFA). These Bursary Funds exist to help students overcome financial barriers to learning and to promote wider access to ensure that people from all backgrounds can take part in learning.

Any student may apply for financial assistance and should be aware that their application will receive consideration in accordance with the eligibility requirements stated in Section 6.

Nelson and Colne College provides information about and promotes access to financial support via information leaflets, the college website, at interviews and at promotional events i.e. open evenings and schools liaison events.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Explain student eligibility criteria for College Bursary Funds
- Detail how funds will be distributed and administered

3. Legislative/Quality Framework

Nelson and Colne College will apply the following published guidelines for the appropriate age groups and funding types, for the use of these funds:

- 16 to 18 education: free meals in further education for academic year 2017 to 2018
- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2017 to 2018 academic year
- Adult Education Budget funding and performance management rules 2017 to 2018
- Advanced learner loans funding rules 2017 to 2018

4. Scope

This policy applies to all eligible (see Section 6) students of Nelson and College, including Lancashire Adult Learning.

5. Definitions/Abbreviations

ACL	Adult and Community Learning
AEB	Adult Education Budget
ALLB	Advanced Learner Loans Bursary
EFA	Education Funding Agency
EHCP	Education and Health Care Plan
FCM	Free College Meals
GSB	Guaranteed Study Bursary
SFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency

6. Eligibility

6.1 To be eligible for funding from any of the bursary funds below, all students must satisfy the following criteria. Specific eligibility requirements apply to each fund as listed from 6.2 to 6.7.

- Residency criteria as set out by the EFA/SFA.
- Following a full or part-time Further Education or Adult Education study programme which is funded by the EFA, SFA or an Advanced Learner Loan (as confirmed by the guidance listed in Section 3).
- Able to demonstrate 'relative financial need' for costs that may deter them joining, continuing or completing their course. Priority for support will be given to students with a household income of £30,000 per annum gross (£21,000 per year for childcare support). Nelson and Colne College may choose to use its discretion where household income exceeds this amount but it is identified that support is needed.

6.2 EFA 16-19 Bursary Fund Discretionary Bursary

Students must be:

- Aged 16-18 on 31st August 2017, or
- Aged 19 or over and continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuer), or
- Aged 19 or over with an EHCP

6.3 EFA 16-19 Bursary Fund Vulnerable Bursary

Students must be:

- Aged 16-18 on 31st August 2017, and

- Be in one of the following defined vulnerable groups:
 - In care
 - Care Leaver
 - In receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
 - In receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit **and** Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right

6.4 EFA Free College Meals

Students must be:

- Aged 16-18 on 31st August 2017, or
- Aged 19 or over and continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuer), or
- Aged 19 or over with an EHCP

The student or their parents must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
- 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.
- 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

6.5 SFA AEB Learner Support Fund

Students must be:

- Aged 19 or over on the first day of the course (20 or over for childcare funding)

6.6 SFA Advanced Learner Loans Bursary

Students must be:

- Aged 19 or over on the first day of the course and
- In receipt of Advanced Learner Loan approved by the Student Loan Company

6.7 Not Eligible

The following students are not eligible to receive any financial assistance from the College Bursary Funds:

- On a waged Apprenticeship or Higher Education programme

- Receiving help with travel/childcare costs through Jobcentre Plus or Work Programme provider (assistance cannot be given for these particular areas).
- Not eligible for funding (Learner Eligibility Criteria as determined by SFA/EFA)
- Self or employer-funded (e.g. paid for a course which could otherwise be funded through an Advanced Learner Loan).

7. What Funds May Be Used For

Funds exist to help students whose access to or completion of education is inhibited by financial constraints or barriers.

The support available will be dependent on the student's personal circumstances, study programme and method of study. (e.g. full-time, part-time, traineeship).

Students may apply for funds to help with the following costs:

7.1 Childcare Costs

Students aged 20 or over, who are parents of compulsory school age children or under can apply for assistance with childcare costs. Students aged under 20 at the start of the academic year should apply for support with childcare costs through the Care to Learn scheme. Further information is available from Student Services.

Payments will only be made to Ofsted registered childcare provision and will normally be made direct to the childcare provider.

For one child, the total maximum award given is £4,937.50 per year (based on £125 per week for a maximum of 36 term weeks and £62.50 per week during college holidays). For more than one child, the total maximum award is £6,912.50 per year (based on £175 per week for a maximum of 36 term weeks and £87.50 per week during college holidays). College holidays cover the 3 half term weeks, Christmas and Easter holidays.

The award will only apply to the days on which the course runs.

The amount of funding available for childcare is limited and there is no guaranteed entitlement to the funds. In exceptional circumstances and where funds allow, the maximum award may be increased.

7.2 College Meals

Free college meals are targeted at disadvantaged students (see Section 6.4). Students will be eligible for a free meal to the value of £2.50 for each day that they attend study or activity that is part of their course. Where study takes place on main site, meals will be supplied through the college catering outlets.

Where study or activity takes place off main site, alternative arrangements are made.

Free college meals may be awarded on a discretionary basis to 16-18 year olds not automatically entitled, and students aged 19 and above if there is a financial need.

On main site, all bursary students are eligible for a free breakfast (as determined by the college) every day before 9am and free fruit throughout the day.

7.3 Course-Related Costs

Assessment of the level of support needed for each programme of study will be carried out in conjunction with information supplied by direct delivery teams regarding course related costs. Bursary funds may be able to assist with costs where equipment is required to enhance a student's access to learning or to increase levels of achievement.

Funds will be made payable directly to the equipment or uniform provider where possible. If the student has already bought equipment or uniform, payment is made in the student's bank account by BACS once evidence of purchase has been received by Student Services.

Where trips are supported, payment will be made through internal transfers only. Where UCAS application fees are supported, payment will be made directly to UCAS.

The cost of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be covered for co-funded 19+ students where it is an essential part of the study programme (e.g. Level 2/3 Childcare/Health and Social Care. 16-18 students, fully funded 19+ students or those funded by an Advanced Learner Loan will not be charged for a DBS if the check is required to participate in learning and an essential part of the qualification. 16-18 students completing work experience as part of their study programme can apply for support for DBS costs if the placement is for longer than 10 hours and a DBS is required.

All items purchased by Bursary Funds remain the property of Nelson and Colne College and must be returned if students do not complete their course.

7.4 Travel Costs

Support through bursary funds with the cost of travel is available to eligible full-time students. Travel support will usually be in the form of a term bus pass however the college will exercise discretion on this decision where another form of support is deemed more suitable or cost effective due to distance travelled. Any payments made for travel costs will be made in the student's bank account by BACS.

Students submitting a late bursary application (after 27th October 2017) will not receive a pass for the full term. They will be issued with weekly passes to cover travel costs to the end of term. In subsequent terms, if passes are not collected by the end of the first half term (9th February 2018 and 25th May 2018), weekly passes will be issued.

If there are excessive demands on travel costs, priority will be given to students who live more than 2 miles from the main college site. Distance will be calculated using the shortest safe walking distance as identified on Google maps.

Students with an EHCP can apply to the Local Authority for support with travel, if it is detailed within the plan. If there are any unforeseen issues with Local Authority assessments, students can apply for temporary support from the College Bursary.

Any exceptional circumstances and Special Educational Needs that do not meet the Local Authority Transport Policy will be considered during assessment and through the appeals procedure where necessary.

7.5 Course Fees

Students aged 16-18 are not charged fees related to tuition, registration or initial exams. Students will be charged for the cost of A Level examination re-sits or may be charged in other areas e.g. GCSE retakes to improve existing exam results. 16-18 students can apply for support. Each application will be considered on its own merit within the college criteria/budget constraints.

Tuition fee support for 19+ students who are not fully-funded or funding study through an Advanced Learner Loan is only given in exceptional circumstances. Students will only be supported where alternative means of financial support are not available and circumstances can be evidenced.

Co-funded 19+ students can apply for support with examinations fees.

Students who are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan are unable to apply for financial support with course fees.

7.6 Additional Learning Support (Advanced Learner Loan students only)

Support through bursary funds with the cost of Additional Learning Support needs is available to students who are formally assessed by Nelson and Colne College as needing support with learning. Awards are available each academic year to a maximum award value of £1500 per student however the college reserves its right to consider exceptional levels of need/circumstances.

7.7 Emergency Support

Under certain circumstances students may face genuine emergencies (e.g. no accommodation, unforeseen costs or charges, theft or loss of possessions or money). In these cases students should make contact with the Safeguarding and Welfare team or Student Services either directly or via their tutor. Following consultation with tutor, student and Student Services Manager every effort will be made to provide the financial assistance that ensures that the student can continue their studies. Under these circumstances it may not be necessary to provide evidence of family income and costs.

8. **Guaranteed Study Bursary**

16-18 year old students in a defined vulnerable group (see Section 6.3) will be entitled to a Guaranteed Study Bursary (GSB) of at least £1,200 (pro-rata based on mode of attendance and length of course). This bursary replaces any entitlement to the 16-18 Discretionary bursary, however students may receive free college meals if they meet eligibility requirements.

The amount of bursary received may be less than the initial award granted as weekly payments are based on good attendance, punctuality, behaviour and progress.

Students will meet with the Safeguarding and Welfare Manager and/or Safeguarding Officer to determine how the bursary will be distributed (e.g. via equipment awards, travel passes, weekly awards). Details of the award will be recorded at the meeting.

If a student requires in excess of £1,200 (or the maximum pro-rata allowance), the Student Services Manager will consider an additional application taking into account personal circumstances and budget constraints.

9. **Young Adult Carers**

Young adult carers experience a range of difficulties and disadvantages which can potentially affect full-time study. Identified young carers will meet with the Safeguarding Officer to determine any financial need and additional awards may be supported for travel, trips and other course related costs in consultation with the Student Services Manager.

10. **Making an Application and Eligibility Assessment**

Application for financial assistance from College Bursary Funds must be made on the standard college bursary application form. Application forms are available on the college website or can be collected from Student Services on request. All new full-time applicants will be sent details on applying in their joining instructions. Assistance with the application process, including completing the application form is available from Student Services.

Applications will be processed only from enrolled students as defined by the College and students must make their application as soon as possible. Funds are limited and will be paid on a 'first come, first served' basis. Before completion, students should read the notes on the application form carefully.

With the exception of the GSB, all applications will be processed by Student Services. All funds are means-tested and applicants will be required to provide evidence to verify total household income. Students applying for the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary for Additional Learning Support costs, or EHCP students eligible for Local Authority support and applying for temporary travel support ONLY will not be means tested.

Evidence of household income will usually be an up-to-date Tax Credit Award Notice or if the household is not in receipt of tax credits other proof of income related benefits, wage slips', self-assessment tax form and other documents.

The amount of support students will receive depend on their age (due to the level of funding college receives for different age groups), type of study programme and individual need.

In all other cases, the funding received will depend on individual circumstances. It will be necessary for students to discuss their circumstances with the Student Services Team Leader, Student Services Manager, Safeguarding Officer or Safeguarding and Welfare Manager, in order to agree a level of assistance.

11. Record Keeping, Complaints and Appeals

Bursary application forms and all relevant assessment and payment documentation will be kept for 6 years.

Should a student have any reason not to be satisfied with the outcome of their application for financial assistance from Learner Support/Bursary Funds, they have the right to appeal. This should be done in writing to the Student Services Manager. The Student Services Manager will investigate the application and appeal, and give a decision within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal. If help is needed preparing an appeal, an appointment may be made with a member of Student Services team.

Should the student be dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal then the normal College Complaints Policy and Procedure should be followed. These procedures must be exhausted before a student contacts the EFA/SFA.

12. Dissemination

Nelson and Colne College Extranet
Nelson and Colne College and Lancashire Adult Learning Moodle
Nelson and Colne College and Lancashire Adult Learning Website
Nelson and Colne College and Lancashire Adult Policy & Procedure File
(located at each reception desk)

13. Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed by Associate Principal – Quality/LAL.

14. Related policies/procedures

Documents related to this policy are:

- Fees Policy 2017/18
- Complaints Policy and Procedure

15. Management Responsibility

The Associate Principal – Quality/LAL has overall management responsibility for this policy within Nelson and Colne College. Day to day management responsibility for this policy is devolved to the Student Services Manager.