

STUDENT BURSARY POLICY

1. Introduction

The College will use Learner Support Fund Grants to provide financial support to students whose access to or completion of further education may be inhibited by financial difficulties. There are currently four separate government funds which students may be eligible for, details are as follows:

- 16-19 Bursary Fund, this is made up of two elements, the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary and the 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary
- 19+ Discretionary Learner Support which is made up of the 19+ Hardship Fund and the 20+ Childcare Fund
- Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund
- Further Education Free Meals

2. Responsibility for Implementation

The criteria for eligibility will be agreed by the Executive Directorate of the College in line with any government guidelines.

The Bursary Officer, in line with the above approval, will review applications and recommend grant amounts to students who meet the criteria providing evidence of their eligibility. The Head of MIS will review and approve the recommended grant payments to students. The Teaching staff have responsibility for ensuring that registers are accurately completed, as attendance marks are used to determine the bursary payments to the students.

Payments to students will be administered and monthly reconciliations undertaken of the payments approved on the Student Bursary systems to the funding received and payments made on the Finance system by the Assistant Principal Finance and Resources.

The Head of MIS will take responsibility for ensuring that all returns to the Funding Bodies are accurate.

3. Policy Statements

The College shall take all necessary steps to ensure that the systems of financial control and management, ensure that the funds are used for the purpose for which such grant was given and will comply with the funding body terms and conditions attached to it. The Finance Department will ensure that financial regulations are adhered to, regularly auditing processes and procedures.

4. 16-19 Bursary, 19+ Discretionary Learner Support, Advanced Learner Loans Bursary

4.1 Priorities (in no particular order)

Eligible ESFA funded students:

- From low income families, including those in receipt of means-tested benefits, with a household income, of £26,000 or below (both salary and any benefits combined)
- Those aged 20+ who need help with childcare costs
- Looked after children and Care Leavers
- Those in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credits in their own right
- Those in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
- Those aged 19 and above who are in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan and meet the eligibility criteria of £26,000 or below (both salary and any benefits combined)

4.2 How funding will be used to support learners:

- Resource Fees
- Books and Equipment/Uniform
- Essential visits and trips
- University Interviews and open days
- Student Fare Card Cost
- Childcare
- Travel
- Other essential costs, where approved by the Head of MIS (College Group), in accordance with the ESFA guidance

4.3 Further Education Free School Meals

The criteria for eligibility and the criteria for how Free Schools Meals should be provided, is set by the ESFA and the College does not have any discretion to award outside of this criteria.

The Free School Meal fund is intended to provide one meal for each day a student attends College, and is funded at a rate of £2.41 per day. The College will endeavour to increase this by £2.59 each day (£5 total), if funding from a discretionary budget is available.

The College will work closely with our catering providers to provide healthy and nutritious meals at a rate that will enable students to purchase both breakfast and lunch on the days they attend College.

5 Higher Education Financial support

5.1 Priorities

The college will spend a proportion of tuition fee income on financial support in the form of a bursary awarded in the first year of a programme. The total number of bursaries awarded will be capped in accordance with the amount of funding set aside as detailed in the HE fees policy 2022 23. A first-come first-served rule will apply.

Programmes initially eligible for consideration are those charging the higher fee, and criterion 1 will apply. These are:

- FdA Sound and Music Production
- FCert Sound and Music Production
- FdA Photography
- BA (Hons) Photography (Top Up)
- BA (Hons) Make-Up, Special effect & Hair for media & Performance (Top Up)
- FdA Graphic & Digital Design
- BA (Hons) Quality Surveying
- FdSc Internet Software Development

5.2 Criteria

Criteria 1 – Full-Time Application

The College will provide a phased cash bursary of £1,000 for Full-time Higher Education students. To be eligible students must:

- a) Be on the first year of a Foundation Degree, Higher National Certificate/Diploma programme.
- b) Be in receipt of the maximum statutory maintenance loan (for students with a household income of £25,000 or less).
- c) Have not received the bursary before.

Criteria 2 – Part-Time Application

The College will provide a phased cash bursary of £1,000 pro-rated for Part-time Higher Education students. To be eligible students must:

- a) Be on the first year of a Foundation Degree, Higher National Certificate/Diploma programme. Honours Degree, Or Level 6 Top-Up programme that is charging above the basic fee (£6,165 per annum)
- b) In receipt of the maximum maintenance loan
- c) Be a resident in POLAR4 Q1 Postcode (ie their home address when applying)
- c) Have not received the bursary before

Criteria 3 – Progressing from a Level 3 course within East Surrey College

6 Quality Standards

The College will:

- 6.1 Raise awareness across the College with communications, tutorials and inductions
- 6.2 The College aims to respond within 10 working days of applications being received, however, at the beginning of the academic year this target may be unachievable, depending on the number of applications. In this instance, ensure that student eligibility is determined by half term if the application is received within the first four weeks of the start of the term.
- 6.3 Provide every applicant with clear, concise and relevant information in support of their application
- 6.4 Adhere to the strict codes of practice relating to confidentiality set out in the College Policy on Data Protection under the GDPR Act May 2017
- 6.5 Ensure that staff involved with Student Support Funds are appropriately trained and informed of change
- 6.6 Provide advice interviews in person by telephone or by email
- 6.7 Log any appeals and ensure that the appeal is actioned

7. Appeals Procedure

Applicants who wish to appeal against a decision made regarding their application to Bursary funds will have the right to appeal to the Head of Student Support (College Group).

Students should be made aware that any financial assistance granted may affect their current benefit entitlement, and are advised that they should speak to the Benefit Agency.

8. Access to Policy

This Policy is available on the College Intranet.

9. Training and Guidance

Questions about this policy and/or procedure, and requests for training, guidance or information on this policy and/or procedure, should be directed to the HR Team.

10. Mechanisms for Feedback

Constructive comment on the continued improvement of this Policy is welcomed and should be forwarded to the Chief Operating Officer.

11. References

None

12. Further information

- Student Bursary Procedure
- Applications Forms 2023/24
- Student Bursary Information 2023/24

- Allocated course-related costs 2023/24 (Prospectus)

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| 15. Approved by: Finance and Resources Committee | Date: 19 June 2023 |
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