

Student Financial Support Policy: The use of student bursary and discretionary support



1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out the criteria that the college will apply in order to administer and distribute the funds that are allocated to the college by the ESFA to provide financial support for individual students. All funds will be allocated in line with ESFA guidance with the aim of reducing or removing financial hardship that might otherwise cause students to drop out of learning.

2. Scope

This policy applies to financial support for all Coulston Sixth Form College students.

3. Definitions

n/a

4. Legislation

n/a

5. Policy Approval History

Impact reassessed February 2012
Revised and approved by SLT June 2014
Revised and approved by SLT July 2015
Revised and approved by SLT July 2016
Revised and approved by SLT June 2017
Revised and approved by SLT June 2018

6. Policy Content

6.1 Eligibility:16-19 Bursary fund

To be eligible to apply for a 16-19 bursary, students must:

- be aged under 19 on 31 August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study (young people who turn 19 can continue to receive funding until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 or the end of their programme of study, whichever is sooner.
- Satisfy the residency criteria set out by the ESFA
- be studying a programme of learning funded by the ESFA

Bursaries cannot be paid to young people in prison or a young offender institution or who have been released on temporary license.

16-19 Guaranteed bursaries

You could get up to £1,200 a year paid weekly if at least one of the following applies:

- You are in or recently left local authority care.
- You get Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support in your name because you are financially supporting yourself and anyone who is dependent on you and living with you, such as a child or partner.
- You get Employment and Support Allowance (ESA); or its replacement Universal Credit and you must also receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP); in your name.
- If the student has been awarded Universal Credit to pay for housing costs, the student is not eligible for a vulnerable bursary unless they are also receiving another eligible benefit.
- You may get the full amount if you have expenses and study full-time on a course of at least 30 weeks. You will usually get less, or no bursary, if your course is shorter, you study part time or have few expenses.
You'll be told what evidence you need, e.g. benefit letters.

16-19 Discretionary support

A bursary worth up to £300 pa, amount dependent upon individual circumstances, is available to Coulsdon Sixth Form College students not eligible for the full Guaranteed Bursary who meet ONE of the following criteria

- (i) The student lives with parents/guardians who are in receipt of any of the following benefits:
 - Income Support (Universal Credit)
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) that does not exceed £16,190
 - Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- (ii) The student lives in a household which has a taxable income of **less than £25,000 for the tax year 2017-18** (evidenced through production of P60, Working Tax Credit Award Certificate, Self-Assessment Tax Calculation Form (SA302) or Universal Credit or bank statements dated within the last 3 – 6 months)

- (iii) The student is experiencing severe financial hardship due to sudden change in circumstances.

Evidence of entitlement to benefits must be supplied with any application.

- Under exceptional circumstances students who are not automatically eligible for an award can also apply for help with one off course related expenses (proof of income or hardship will be asked for). Applications for additional help will be considered on an individual basis and is dependent upon available funds. Please contact the Colleges Student Services Office for more details.

6.2 Eligibility: 19+ hardship support

To be eligible to apply for 19+ hardship funds students must:

- meet the standard residency criteria as contained in the most recent notes - Learner Eligibility Guidance
- be studying a programme of learning funded by the ESFA

Income criteria (students must satisfy one of these)

- They are receiving themselves, or are the dependent of someone receiving a means tested state benefit from the list in section 6.1.
- They live in a household where the total income is below £25,000 per year.
- They cannot prove entitlement under the above criteria but are nevertheless facing extreme hardship – for example because of a sudden change in circumstances.

6.3 Application process

Students should use the Coulsdon College Bursary Application Form to make an initial application. Applicants will need to include evidence of income and/or benefit entitlement. Where possible forms should be downloaded from the College Website, completed and handed in to Student Reception with supporting evidence. **Students must make a separate application each year.**

Students will be informed about this policy at enrolment and induction and will be encouraged to apply as early as possible.

All applications received by the last day before the October half term break will be backdated to the start of the academic year.

Students can submit an application for funding after the October half term break and if successful will receive funding for the remainder of the academic year.

Guaranteed bursary applications that are submitted after the October half term will be backdated to the start of the half term in which the application was received.

Applications for discretionary funding received after the October half term will be considered subject to availability of funds.

6.4 Regular Payments

Bursary payments will be made directly to the student's bank account.

Students entitled to a Guaranteed Bursary will receive a weekly payment of £34.00. Payments will be made directly into the students bank account on a Monday based on the previous weeks attendance.

Students who make a successful application for discretionary funding will receive an initial payment of £50 during the first half term. Subsequent half termly £50 payments will be made subject to attendance and punctuality. (see 6.6)

Every student on the Discretionary and Guaranteed Bursary will be entitled to receive a daily meal allowance to be used in the on-site catering facilities.

6.5 Additional payments

Students who receive the guaranteed or discretionary bursary may apply for extra help to meet additional costs as set out in the table below, subject to availability of funds.

In exceptional circumstances the Assistant Principal - Students has the discretion to authorise payments above this threshold in individual cases, subject to availability of funds.

All payment amounts for discretionary support and the associated income threshold are subject to review and may increase or decrease depending upon the level of funding the college receives and the number of eligible students who make an application in any given year.

Applications for extra funding should be made on the appropriate form, available from Student Reception.

| Payment category | Comments | Method of payment to student | Guideline payment |
|--|--|--|--|
| Start of course costs | A voluntary contribution towards the college fund | Transfer to relevant college budget | £25 single payment |
| Meals | From the college refectory. Where students are entitled to Free School Meals the allowance will be supplemented from the fund. | A daily allowance will be credited to the student's access card. Any unused funds will be cleared at the end of the day. | £3.50 per day (Subject to any in year price increases) |
| Educational visits and residential stays | Where these are a requirement for the course, up to 100% of the cost can be claimed. Where funds are available optional trips will also be funded up to 100%. | Transfer to relevant college budget | Generally £400 per year subject to funds |
| Travel costs for attendance at university interviews | Up to three per year. Students must travel by the cheapest viable route (e.g. coach rather than train where feasible). | Transfer to student's bank account, half termly, in arrears. | £100 per year |
| Work experience placements | Travel costs | Transfer to student's bank account, half termly, in arrears. | £30 per week |
| UCAS fee | Application fee | Transfer to student bank account. | UCAS charges applicable |
| Exam fees | Approved re-sits or re-marks only. For re-sits, students must be currently enrolled on the course. | Transfer to relevant college budget | 4 resits per year (up to a maximum amount of £140) |
| Travel to and from College | Students who are entitled to free bus travel whose quickest/simplest route (as shown on TfL Journey Planner or similar) entails 3 or more buses, or lasts 90 minutes or more, can claim for the cost of travel by train. | Transfer to student's bank account. | Maximum £30 per week |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | Students are expected to travel by the cheapest viable route and to make use of any discount schemes available. | | |
| Childcare | Students aged 20 or under at the start of their course should apply to the Care to Learn Scheme. https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/overview | Payment will be made directly to the childcare provider. | £175 per week if in London. |
| Emergency hardship allowance | One-off payment for exceptional hardship | Cash or bank account | Usually no more than £50 on any one occasion |

Except for emergency hardship allowance, students will need to submit receipts with their application.

6.6 Attendance and Conduct

Guaranteed Bursary payments will not be made in respect of any week in which the student has attendance below 90% or punctuality below 95% unless the absence and/or lateness is authorised. Payments will not be made for any week in which the student does not attend college at all.

Discretionary or additional bursary payments will be withheld if the student's overall attendance is below 90% or their punctuality is below 95% for the relevant half term period, unless the absence/lateness has been authorised.

Students whose payments are to be withheld will be contacted by email to their student college email address before the payment date and given the reason their payment is stopped and information about how to appeal. (See Para 6.11)

Students and their parents are advised to refer to the college website for a written explanation of these conditions.

6.7 Processing applications

- Applications prior to the October 2018 half term break will be backdated to the start of the academic year for all allowances except a

meal allowance which will become payable from the day the application is approved.

- Applicants will be notified by email to their college email account of the decision taken regarding their application.
- Under normal circumstances, an initial application will be dealt with within 4 working weeks.
- Applications for additional payments made via the appropriate form will be dealt with within 5 working days.

6.8 Fraudulent claims

If the College has reason to suspect that a student or their parents have deliberately provided false information in order to fraudulently obtain money from the fund, we will seek recovery of any overpaid funds and will pass on full details to the funding body. The student may be subject to disciplinary action for Gross Misconduct for their part in the matter.

6.9 Contingency Fund

The College will allocate a contingency reserve of up to £1,000 from the General Reserve. The use of these additional funds will require authorisation from the Assistant Principal - Students.

6.10 Administration

5% of the annual fund from the ESFA will be used by the College for the administration of the fund.

6.11 Appeals

- Students have the right of appeal when an initial application is unsuccessful or when payments are suspended or withheld (as outlined in section 6.6).
- Appeals must be made in writing to the Principal within 5 working days, on the appeal form which will be attached to the notification email.

6.12 Alternative sources of support

- Students who do not meet the criteria for student financial support, or who need a level of support that exceeds the limits set within this policy will be referred to the College Counsellor and Welfare Officer who will discuss their circumstances in order to help them to identify alternative sources of support.
- Students who incur additional study expenses through due to a disability or additional learning needs will be referred to the College's Learning Support Manager.

6.13 Equal Opportunities

- All applications will be considered according to the above criteria.
- The fund will be administered within the procedures and practice of the College's Equality and Diversity Policy.

6.14 Availability of funds

- With the exception of the Guaranteed Bursary and the FE Free Meals allowance all awards set out in this policy are subject to review dependent upon student numbers and the availability of funds.

EQUALITIES GRID

Were changes made to the Policy when reviewed? If YES complete the Partial Equality Analysis table.

| Questions for all Policies | Enter Y / N |
|--|-------------|
| Is it likely that the Policy Revision could have a negative impact:- | |
| Due to ethnic group? | N |
| Due to gender? | N |
| Due to disability? | N |
| Due to sexual orientation? | N |
| Due to their religious beliefs (or none)? | N |
| Due to pregnancy | N |
| On people due to them being transgender or transsexual? | N |
| Additional questions for Policies relating to Staff | N/A |
| Is it likely that the Policy Revision could have a negative impact:- | |
| On people due to their age? | N |
| On people due to their marital or civil partnership status? | N |
| On people with dependants/caring responsibilities? | N |

| | | | |
|----------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| Date of Review | Reviewed and amended previous policy: June 2017 Review of this policy: June 2018 | Did you make changes? | Y |
|----------------|--|-----------------------|---|

If YES please speak with the Principal as a full Equality Analysis may be required.

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