

Learner Support Fund Application Guidance Notes

AM I ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR FUNDING?

To check if you are eligible to receive funding, please read the eligibility criteria outlined below. (This guidance applies to the academic year 2011-12)

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligibility is dependent on household income and students/students' parents or guardians will need to provide full documentary proof of current benefit or gross household earnings along with their application form. Students who are self-employed will need to provide authorised evidence of income. Where the applicant is aged under 19 this must be a copy of the full Tax Credit Award Notification (TCAN). **An NHS Tax Credit Exemption card would be acceptable as proof.** Please contact Student Services immediately if you have any problems with this.

Students must have an annual family income **below £20,817** to be considered in the initial award stages. (£30,000 for those applying for accommodation).

Students who have a family income of between 20,817 and £25,000 should apply but these applications will be held until after 1st October and will be subject to funding being available.

Applications will NOT be processed without proof of benefit/income

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Students following government (YPLA or SFA) funded full time or part-time courses, who are 16 years and over and satisfy one or more of the following criteria:-

- Students aged at least 16 and under 19 years of age on 31/08/11 who are in care, are leaving care or are in direct receipt of Income Support.
- Students who are economically or socially disadvantaged and at risk of not taking up or continuing in further education. This group includes students with physical or other disabilities, medical conditions and/or learning difficulties as well as those on low incomes and/or income-based benefits).
- Students who have been in care, on probation, are young parents or are otherwise considered at risk.
- Learners aged over 19 years of age on 31/08/11 working towards a full level 1, 2 or 3 qualification.
- Those eligible for fee remission because they are themselves, or are the dependant of someone who is, receiving a means-tested benefit or tax credits, particularly where benefits are reduced when the learner reaches the age of 19.
- Students who have been resident in the EU for 3 years prior to the start of your course, other than for the purpose of education **and** have settled status within the UK (within the meaning of the Immigration Act 1971).

AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

The Learner Support fund is limited and cannot support all applications. These are assessed monthly and allocations are made on a first come first served basis and there is no guarantee of assistance.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Appeals should be made in writing to Paul O'Shea (Head of Marketing and Student Services). However the Learner Support Fund panel's original decision will normally be upheld if no new evidence of financial hardship is forthcoming.

COSTS ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

The main types of cost where support is available are as follows:

- **Childcare** costs (for students who are aged 20 or over on 1st Sept) where no other help is available and where costs are not already covered under any other scheme e.g. Child Tax Credits. Payments will be made direct to the childcare provider and attendance monitored – you must attend for at least 90%.
- **Equipment** – essential for the course (receipts must be provided).
- **Accommodation** costs via the Residential Bursary. Available to students who have daily travel in excess of 2.5 hours one way. Payments will be made direct to the landlady/landlord.
- **Travel assistance** – through your local authority for 16-18 yr olds; for petrol, bus or train fares if you're aged 19 or over. NB. You must live over 3 miles from your campus to qualify.
- Disability-related study costs (where not already covered by other funding) including help with accommodation and travel for part-time disabled students irrespective of distance from college. Please note that the fund cannot support the total cost of specialist transport due to funding restrictions.

COMPLETING & RETURNING THE FORM

- If you require help to complete this application form, please ask a member of the Student Services team. We can also arrange for this information to be produced in other formats or languages, if required.
- The form must be completed in ink and signed by the applicant.
- Current proof of benefit or income **must** be submitted with the form.
- You should state clearly what type of assistance you are applying for; incomplete forms cannot be processed. If you don't know the exact cost of the help required, don't worry.
- Applications for childcare support **must** be submitted by 31st July. Confirmation of funding for childcare support will not be made until early August, irrespective of application date.
- Please return completed forms to the address below.

AWARDS/PAYMENTS

- Students will be advised by letter once the awards have been made.
- Payments will be made by cheque or payment straight into your bank account or where possible direct to the supplier.
- Students must claim payments promptly; **any award not claimed within 3 months of your course start date will be withdrawn.**
- **Receipts and or invoices for 19+ travel, childcare and accommodation must be received by the following dates: Term 1 December 12th, Term 2 March 26th, and Term 3 July 5th. Any requests for payment after these dates will be rejected.**
- Students must have attendance of 90% or more, awards from the Learner Support Fund are made on a **loan basis**. If you successfully complete your course, the loan will be converted to a non-repayable grant.
- Awards are made annually and you must re-apply for assistance towards your studies next year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUND, PLEASE CONTACT:

The LSF Team - Student Services
The College of West Anglia,
Tennyson Avenue,
Kings Lynn,
PE30 2QW

Telephone 01553 761144