

TITLE: 16 – 19 Financial Support Policy 2018-19	REF: LS006	VERSION:2
APPROVAL BODY: Activate Learning Corporation	DATE: 16 April 2018	REVIEW DATE: March 2019
LEAD PERSON: Paul Stallard		
VERSION	REVIEWER/APPROVAL	REVIEW NOTES
1. 23 March 2018	GET	
2. 16 April 2018	Activate Learning Corporation	

16-19 Financial Support Policy 2018 - 19

Note: Government guidance is expected to be available for 2018/19 funding by the end of March 2018, this policy will then be updated to reflect any changes.

Policy Statement

The Activate Learning group is committed to encouraging and enabling participation in education so that individuals reap the personal and economic benefits of life enhancing opportunities created by lifelong learning. We recognise that money issues can be a significant barrier to participation, particularly for the most vulnerable people.

Activate Learning aims to use government bursary funds in the most effective and efficient way possible to ensure that the maximum number of eligible students at any of our college campuses are able to access financial support to remove any barrier to participation.

Purpose

This policy document outlines how Activate Learning intends to use its allocation of discretionary bursary funds during the 2018/19 academic year. The bursary schemes for future years will be confirmed once the group's 16 - 19+ bursary allocation for the year is announced.

Please see the document '19+ Financial support Policy 2018-19' for the corresponding policy for adult learners aged 19 or above on 31 August 2018.

Promotion

Activate Learning colleges actively promote the availability of financial support to new and continuing students throughout the application process via; the website, prospectuses, leaflets, keep warm communications, open event advice sessions and the interview process. All materials are written in simple, plain English and are available in alternative formats.

In addition, the colleges work with local schools and intermediary agencies to identify vulnerable students who may be eligible but who may be deterred from applying due to lack of confidence, fear of stigma or another reason.

We promote the following bursary schemes to all students studying at Activate Learning:

- Travel Bursary
- Free Meals
- Residential Bursary
- Vulnerable Bursary
- Course Cost and Trip Bursary

In addition the colleges promote the Government's Care to Learn childcare scheme for young people who began their programme of study when aged under 20.

Administration

The Activate Learning bursaries are managed according to the guidance laid out in the Education and Skills Funding Agency's document; Funding Guidance for Young People 2018 to 2019. Records of applications, eligibility evidence and payments are complete, accurate and stored securely for internal and external audit.

Eligibility

To qualify, students must meet the eligibility criteria and the evidence requirements outlined on the application form and procedure accompanying this policy appendix 1.

Students must be enrolled on a funded further education programme.

Students must be considered a 'home' student for the purposes of further education funding. 'Home' status is the same for the bursary as it is for fee eligibility purposes. Awards will be made based on the residency information provided on the Bursary Fund Application 2018-19 form and evidence is may be requested to support this. However, assessments which are made by the Advice and Admissions team at enrolment will be used to confirm 'home' status and we withhold the right to withdraw awards should this status not be confirmed

Eligibility under a low income criteria assumes that students have applied for all other statutory government financial support and evidence of this will be required.

Student contributions

Students are expected to make a percentage contribution towards their travel pass, please see details in appendix 1.

Conditions

Awards are made proportionate to the student's need.

As the discretionary bursary is limited, awards are made on a first-come-first-served basis.

A proportion of the bursary is reserved for students joining courses throughout the year. The group reserves the right to close the scheme in September to review the allocation of funds and it may be reopened at a later date.

All the required documentary eligibility evidence must be provided before an application can be processed, incomplete applications or applications without all the required evidence will not be processed.

Ongoing scheduled payments are conditional on students maintaining an acceptable overall level of attendance of 92%. In addition to this good behaviour and adhering to the Student Standards of Behaviour and Code of Conduct is a requirement. Students' attendance will be monitored and financial support could be withdrawn if their attendance drops below this level. No funding will be withdrawn without consideration of all the relevant factors or without *notification*.

The conditions of the scheme are made clear to all applicants when they apply and they are asked to sign the application form to confirm that these are understood. Students receive confirmation by letter or email of their bursary award and a reminder of the conditions with regards to attendance.

Student's responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to notify Activate Learning of any change of circumstances that affect their bursary award. Changes include address, bank details, study programme, childcare provider and withdrawal from their course.

Students are also responsible for planning their journey to college, informing us of the travel company and where they will alight their transport. They are required to liaise directly with the travel company if they require a replacement pass. If they withdraw from their programme students are required to return their travel pass to Activate Learning.

If a student fails to notify Activate Learning of any changes affecting their bursary award or withdraws from their course we may seek to recover any overpayments of bursary funds. Any ongoing scheduled payments will stop on the last day the student attended their programme. Students are also required to return their travel pass.

Students are responsible for informing the Department of Work and Pensions about any financial support payments they receive, as these payments may affect your eligibility to some benefits

Appeals

Students will receive confirmation by letter or email that their application has been unsuccessful this includes details on how to appeal this decision.

Once their appeal has been considered and a decision has been communicated, there is no further right of appeal.

Feedback and evaluation

Activate Learning listens to students and works in partnership with them, to create policies and procedures that improve the learning experience and maximise student success. Students' satisfaction with the financial support schemes and how they are administered is carried out through learner voice and feedback surveys.

The group evaluates the impact of financial support by evaluating the retention rate of students in receipt of support from the scheme and by equality measures.

Inclusion and diversity

Activate Learning does not discriminate against any student group, either directly or indirectly, we also measures and report on uptake of the scheme by gender, ethnicity, ability, level of programme, curriculum area, mode of study and personal circumstance to be assured that no group is excluded and those students potentially facing the greatest barriers are able to benefit from the available funds. Positive steps are taken to review and address any inequality or imbalance.

Data protection and confidentiality

Students and parents/carers who wish to discuss their family situation in private will be offered a confidential meeting space. Information is only shared on a strictly need-to-know basis.

All personal and/or sensitive information is stored securely on our server and in lockable cabinets with access limited to relevant staff only. All relevant information is held for seven years and then destroyed through a confidential disposal system.

Scope

This policy is relevant for all 16-19 year old students, students aged 19 to 24 and have an Education, Health and Care (EHCP) and students aged 19 or over and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 who are eligible to apply for financial support. The policy applies to students at Banbury and Bicester College, City of Oxford College and Reading College or anyone at our operational sites enrolled onto a further education study programme with Activate Learning.

Definitions

ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
SFA	Skills Funding Agency
Bursary	This is provided to Colleges to remove financial barriers to participation.
Home Stay	Housing for a student with a host family, with or without meals provided.
Gross	Income before tax and employment deductions
ALL	Advanced Learner Loan
LDA	Learning Disability Assessment
EHCP	Educational Health and Care Plan.
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
UASC	Unaccompanied asylum-seeking child
ROTL	Released on Temporary Licence

References

- [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2017 to 2018 academic year](#)
- [16 to 18 Education: Free meals in Further Education for academic year 2018 to 2019](#)
- [16 to 18 Residential Bursary Fund guide: 2017 to 2018 academic year](#)
- [Care to Learn guide for institutions: academic year 2018 to 2019](#)

Equality Impact Assessment

We believe that people from a range of backgrounds and experiences can enhance the life and development of the institution and that all individuals should be treated on the basis of individual merit and without prejudice. Activate Learning will, therefore aim to provide an education service which actively promotes equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination on grounds of protected characteristics, namely age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation and socio economic status in both education and employment. Activate Learning expects all employees, students, and associated partner organisations to adopt this policy.

Activate learning is committed to carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) on its policies and procedures in order that some measurement is made of the contribution that the policy/procedure makes towards equality and diversity objectives.

Name and role of person(s) carrying out EIA	
Name of policy, procedure, practice, plan or process	
What is the main aim or purpose of the policy, procedure, practice, plan or process?	
Is this a new (N) or existing (E) policy, practice, plan or process? (Please tick relevant box)	N E
Person responsible for policy, practice, plan or process	
Date of equality impact assessment	

Evidence

What information has been gathered to inform the EIA? Consider, for example, people’s views from focus groups and surveys, and statistical information or other relevant evidence. Consider both quantitative and qualitative information	
What has this information revealed?	
Is further information required? If so, how will this information be gathered and	

used?	
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Impact

<p>Has the equality impact assessment identified potential or actual areas of concern, negative impact, or areas of inequality? If so, please tick the relevant boxes.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Race Disability Gender (including Gender reassignment) Pregnancy / maternity Sexual orientation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Age Religion and belief Marriage / civil partnership Socio-economic Other area of equality (please state)</p>
<p>Has the equality impact assessment identified areas that would further advance equality if changes were made, for example fostering good relations between different groups, meeting needs or encouraging participation? If so, please tick the relevant boxes.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Race Disability Gender (including Gender reassignment) Pregnancy / maternity Sexual orientation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Age Religion and belief Marriage / civil partnership Socio-economic Other area of equality (please state)</p>
<p>Please provide a brief summary of the outcomes of the EIA including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Issues identified in the EIA · Areas of potential inequality · Opportunities to further advance equality <p>Opportunities to foster good relations</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Number of students participating vs whole college, amounts received, unsuccessful applicants by</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gender Ethnicity Ability Level of learning Curriculum area</p>	

Action - Equality Action Plan

Issue	Planned Actions for Improvement	Expected Outcomes and Targets with Milestones & Target Dates	Person Responsible for Completion
<p>If the action proposed will not fully eliminate potential or actual negative impact, Please state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Why is this and how can it be justified? <p>Please discuss this issue with your senior manager</p>			