

Financial Support for Further Education Students

Policy description:

The following policy sets out how Craven College will strive to:

- Do everything possible to ensure no eligible student has to withdraw from their course due to lack of financial support.
- Take steps to ensure that all eligible students can apply for financial help, thus supporting “widening participation” and the provision of learning for under-represented groups.
- Ensure that any personal information provided in an application is subject to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Ensure that all applications for financial support are dealt with efficiently and fairly.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of financial support for students on a regular basis.

Craven College is committed to do everything possible to support its students; however, Bursary Funding is limited and funding cannot be guaranteed.

Formal Review Cycle:	Annual		
Latest Formal Review (month/year):	07/19	Next Formal Review Due (month/year):	07/20
Policy Owner:	Catherine Jackson, Student Services Manager		
Impact Assessed by:		Impact Assessment Date:	

APPROVAL REQUIRED

SMT Y/N	Y	SMT approved:	Date	8 July 2019
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PUBLICATION

Website Y/N	N	Intranet Y/N	Y	Student VLE Y/N	Y	Other:	
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Policy and guidelines for Financial Support for Further Education

1. Introduction

Craven College receives allocations of funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The Bursary Funds exist to help students continue with and complete their course where they would otherwise be prohibited from doing so on financial grounds. The Bursary is intended to help with the hardship needs of individual students. Generally, awards from the Bursary will be used towards essential course related costs such as books, equipment, travel and other costs associated with living and learning. Craven College will seek to ensure that the funds available are:

- Distributed fairly through a process which is transparent and easily understood. Craven College provides information about and promotes access to financial support via information leaflets, the college website, and at promotional events i.e. open evenings and school liaison events.
- Assessed and allocated to each individual's need, taking in to account the financial circumstances of the applicant and the intended use of the award.
- Used to widen access to, remove financial barriers to, participation in Further Education where ever possible.

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

Craven 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
- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2019-to-2020-academic-year>
- Adult Education Budget funding and performance management rules
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2019-to-2020>
- Advanced learner loans funding rules
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-learner-loans-funding-rules-2019-to-2020>

4. Scope

This policy applies to all eligible (see Section 6) students of Craven College

5. Definitions/Abbreviations

AEB Adult Education Budget

ALLB Advanced Learner Loans Bursary

EFA Education Funding Agency

EHCP Education and Health Care Plan

FCM Free College Meals

GB Guaranteed Bursary

ESFA 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/ESFA.
- Following a full time Further Education or Adult Education study programme which is funded by the EFA, ESFA 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. Craven College may choose to use its discretion where household income exceeds defined amounts but it is identified that support is needed.

6.2 ESFA 16-19 Bursary Fund Discretionary Bursary

Students must be:

- Aged 16-18 on 31st August 2019, 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 ESFA 16-19 Bursary Fund Vulnerable Bursary

Students must be:

- Aged 16-18 on 31st August 2019, 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 ESFA Free College Meals

Students must be:

- Aged 16-18 on 31st August 2019, 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 as assessed by HMRC
- 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 ESFA 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 ESFA 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

- Not eligible for funding (Learner Eligibility Criteria as determined by ESFA/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. Students may apply for funds to help with the following costs:

7.1 Childcare Costs

Students aged 20 or over with a sole or combined household income of less than £21,000 per annum, and 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 (<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>). Further information is available from Student Services.

Childcare costs can only be considered up to a maximum of £125 per week for one child or £175 per week if more than one child. Any government funding e.g. Early Years Grant (EYG) should be used first. Payments will only be made to Ofsted registered childcare provision and will be made direct to the childcare provider by BACS each month, and are dependent upon attendance. Students must provide evidence that they are the main carer for the child e.g. Birth Certificate and must not have a partner able to look after the child whilst attending College.

The award will only apply to the days / half days on which the course runs. Childcare cannot be paid during holidays or absence. Retainer and holiday cover costs cannot be covered by the fund.

Childcare applications need to be submitted to Student Services within 28 days of starting the course for childcare fees to be back-dated to the start of the course (including all evidence). Applications received after 28 days will only be paid for the week in which the application is received. The amount of funding available for childcare is limited and there is no guaranteed entitlement to the funds.

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 £3.00 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 cafe.

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 Aireville campus, all bursary students are eligible for a free Breakfast (determined by the college) every day in attendance prior to 8.40am.

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 each School 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. Eligibility for the bursary towards course related costs is assessed on household income of no more than £21,000 and provides help up the value of 50% of the cost of essential kit, equipment and uniform.

Payment is made in the student's bank account by BACS once evidence of purchase has been received by Student Services. All items purchased by Bursary Funds remain the property of Craven 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 and adults studying a qualification funded through Adult Education Budget Full Fee Remission. Craven College have put in place a £1 per day maximum cost per principal journey to college, based upon use of the cheapest form of travel by public transport and up to the value of £200 per term. Travel support may also be in the form of a subsidised term bus pass. Eligibility for the bursary towards travel costs is assessed on household income of no more than £31,000.

The college will exercise discretion on its 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 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.

7.5 Course Fees

Students aged 16-18 are not charged fees related to tuition, registration or initial exams.

Tuition fee support for 19+ students who are not fully-funded 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.

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

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 Student Services Team. Following consultation, 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 Bursary (GB) of at least £1,200 (pro-rata based on mode of attendance and length of course). 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.

9. Capacity and Delivery Fund (Extended Work Placements)

Bursary funds will be available to support with extended work placements for 2019/2020. This funding is to meet potential increased demand for help from any students who may need to travel further to access their placement and/or incur additional costs for equipment and clothing.

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 can be collected from Student Services. All new full-time applicants will be sent details on applying in their enrolment 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.

With the exception of the GB, all funds are means-tested and applicants will be required to provide evidence to verify total household income. 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 funding received will depend on individual circumstances. It may be necessary for students to discuss their circumstances with the Student Services Team, 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 within Pay My Student, the College's student financial support system.

Should a student have any reason not to be satisfied with the outcome of their application for financial assistance from 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/ESFA.