



**BUXTON & LEEK
COLLEGE**

Financial Support Fund Policy

21/22



Document control

Title	Discretionary Funding BLC
Service Area	Learner Journey Team
Version	1
Target Audience	Students, Parents/ Guardians, Staff, External IAG
Team & reviewer	Eleanor Ives – on behalf of the Learner Journey Team
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Review date	26.04.2022

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Buxton and Leek College recognises that a number of students face barriers when accessing education due to the additional course costs involved outside of tuition fees.

Buxton and Leek College is committed to promoting equality by ensuring student support funds are made available to assist disadvantaged students and students facing financial hardship in order to improve their student experience and support them to fulfil their potential.

The Financial Support Fund Policy states the college's commitment to students with regard to financial support and in line with all current national and college regulations, guidelines and legislation.

2. DEFINITIONS

This Financial Support Fund Policy has been developed to allow students and potential students to determine their eligibility for financial support from Buxton and Leek College. Information in this policy relates to the 2021/22 Academic year only.

3. PRINCIPLES

The Financial Support Fund policy will:

- Use clear and responsive processes and systems, which apply the 'student first' approach throughout
- Operate cashless payment systems where possible
- Promote the College's commitment to equality and diversity
- Raise student aspiration and social mobility
- Enhance the ability of students to achieve their goals whilst at the College
- Ensure that students are treated fairly within an open and transparent application process
- Widen participation in Further and Higher Education
- Support the achievement of key college outcomes
- Administer, record and monitor funds, ensuring that funds are used for its intended purposes in accordance with internal and external regulations and guidelines

4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This policy covers the following Bursaries included within the Financial Support Fund:

- 16-19 Bursary Fund including Vulnerable Bursary element
- Free College Meal Scheme (cafeteria cards)
- Care to Learn

For Adult Learners

- 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund
- Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Operations Manager for the Learner Journey Team is the Executive Owner of the Policy

The Student Money and Rights Adviser is owner of the Policy and responsible for successful implementation, which includes:

- Ensuring all applications are processed within agreed timescales
- Providing advice and support to curriculum departments, enquirers and applicants
- Compliance with funding and audit guidelines

Student Mentors are responsible for:

- Ensuring students in need of financial support are identified and supported effectively and efficiently so that their learning is not affected

Progress coaches are responsible for:

- Gatekeeping and signposting Financial Support Fund related enquiries

Tutors are responsible for:

- Setting essential course costs
- Ensuring student attendance records are completed accurately and systems are regularly updated
- Ensuring student progress and performance is monitored and systems are regularly updated
- Ensuring programmes are up to date with all course delivery details

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The roles and responsibilities of employees in implementing the policy and procedures are set out clearly in the guidelines.

All new employees are made aware of the policy and procedures during the formal employee induction process.

Updated and amended procedures are disseminated and reinforced in training sessions, team meetings and via email communications.

Employees and students have access to this policy on the College website. Information will be made available to students at various stages of the learner journey:

- Pre Entry
- Entry including Induction
- On programme
- Exit and Progression

We will communicate to current and prospective students through the following methods:

- Induction (drop in's, group tutorials)
- Leaflets, flyers, posters

- Email communication via Unimail account
- Letters
- Texts

College Announcements

- Social Media
- Tutorials
- Website

The College will provide information to students in alternative formats if requested.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Policy and associated procedures will be formally reviewed annually by the Operations Manager and Student Money Adviser.

Representatives from the Faculties and Learner Journey Team be involved in the review of the Policy.

Annual surveys will be undertaken to monitor student satisfaction with the services provided, and action plans initiated to improve targets that may be set.

External Documents:

16-19 Funding Guidance can be accessed at:

[16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2021-to-2022-academic-year)

Care to Learn funding guidance can be accessed at:

[Care to Learn Guide 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-to-learn-guide-2021-to-2022-academic-year)

Free meals in Further Education guidance can be accessed at:

[Free meals in further education funded institutions: guide for the 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-for-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year)

Adult Education budget funding guidance can be accessed at :

[Adult education budget \(AEB\) funding rules 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2021-to-2022)

• Advanced Learner Loans funding guidance can be accessed at:

[Advanced learner loans funding rules 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advanced-learner-loans-funding-rules-2021-to-2022)

GUIDELINES

16-19 Student Support Funds

There are a number of funds and support schemes available for students aged 16-19, which are:

- Vulnerable element of the 16-19 Bursary Fund
- 16-19 Discretionary Support Fund
- Free College Meals
- Care to Learn

These funds are designed to help students with specific costs associated with their programme of study and are available to students who are on ESFA funded courses.

These funds and support schemes are not available to students on Apprenticeship, Higher Education or Full-Cost courses.

16-19 Bursary Fund Vulnerable Element		
Support Available	Eligibility Criteria	Age
<p>Up to £1200 per academic year per student, to support with essential course costs, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel • Equipment • Laptop • Meals • Trips • Hardship (panel discussion) <p>Where possible the above will be paid in kind, however should any direct payments be granted- these will be paid on a fortnightly basis and subject to 85% attendance.</p>	<p>This fund is available to students who are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young People in Care • Care Leavers • Students in receipt of Income Support • Students in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own name 	<p>Students need to be 16-18 years of age as of 31.08.2021</p>

16-19 Discretionary Bursary Fund		
Support Available	Eligibility Criteria	Age
<p>Where a student's Household Income is between £25,001 and £35,000 the student may be entitled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel support <p>Where a student's Household Income is under £25,000, the student will be placed into priority banding dependent on Household income and will receive between 75-90% support towards the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel support • Equipment • Kit • Uniform • Books • Laptop Support • Essential Field Trips • Hardship (subject to a panel assessment) <p>Where equipment, kit, books and uniform costs are not paid direct to the department- students will be expected to pay upfront for these and provide receipts for reimbursement.</p> <p>Where possible, the above will be paid in kind, however should any direct payments be granted- these will be paid on a fortnightly basis and subject to 85% attendance.</p>	<p>This fund is available to students who have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Household Income up to £35,000 (see support available) • Dependants of someone on Income Support • Dependants of someone on Income Based JSA or Employment and Support Allowance • Dependants of someone on Universal Credit • Dependants of someone claiming the Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit • Students who can demonstrate that they are facing financial hardship 	<p>- Students need to be 16-18 years of age as of 31.08.2021</p> <p>- Or aged 19 on 31st August and continuing in to their second year of a two year course they began aged 16-18</p> <p>- or aged 19-25 and in receipt of an Education Health Care Plan</p>

Free College Meals Scheme		
Support Available	Eligibility Criteria	Age
<p>For students studying onsite:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Meal card (value of £5 per day) for use in onsite cafeterias • Direct payment of £3.50 per day <p>Students studying offsite i.e. Motorvehicle & Buxton FC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct payment of £5 per day <p>Direct payments will only be made in exceptional circumstances and at the approval of the panel. In the event study moves to remote learning the equivalent of £3.50 will be paid to you via BACS.</p> <p>Direct payments are subject to 85% attendance.</p>	<p>Students, or their parents/guardians, must be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support • Income-based Jobseekers Allowance • Income-related Employment Support Allowance • Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit • Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 • Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190 (assessed by HMRC). • Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit • Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 p/a 	<p>- Students need to be 16-18 years of age as of 31.08.2021</p> <p>- Or aged 19 on 31st August and continuing in to their second year of a two year course they began aged 16-18</p> <p>- or aged 19-25 and in receipt of an Education Health Care</p>

Care to Learn scheme		
Support Available	Eligibility Criteria	Age
<p>Childcare costs for study programme including work placement up to £160 per child per week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for the child(ren) for whom they are claiming Care to Learn • The other parent is unable to provide childcare, for example, they are also in education or are absent. • The other parent is not claiming childcare through Tax Credits • Full details of eligibility can be found here https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students aged under 20 at the start of their course • Students who become 20 during their study programme can continue to get funding to the end of that specific study programme.

Adult learner funds

There are two funds available for students aged 19+, which are:

- 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund
- Advanced Learner Loan Bursary

These funds are designed to help students with specific costs associated with their programme of study and are available to students who are on ESFA funded courses

19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund		
Support Available	Eligibility Criteria	Age
<p>Students will be placed into priority banding dependent on Household income and will receive between 75-90% support towards the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel support • Childcare Support • Tuition Fees* • Professional registrations or Memberships • Equipment • Kit • Uniform • Books • Essential field Trips • Meals • Hardship (subject to a panel assessment) <p>Where equipment, kit, books and uniform costs are not paid direct to the department- students will be expected to pay upfront for these and provide receipts for reimbursement.</p>	<p>This fund is available to students who have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Household Income up to £35,000 • Receive Income Support • Receive Income Based JSA or Employment Support Allowance • Receive the Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit • Receive Universal Credit • Students who demonstrate that they are facing financial hardship • Tuition Fee's - Students can apply for tuition fee support if not eligible for ESFA tuition fee remission for an Advanced Learner Loan <p>Where possible, support will be paid in kind, however should any direct payments be granted- these will be paid on a fortnightly basis and subject to 85% attendance.</p> <p>For childcare support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Childcare must be provided by a OFSTED registered provider •Learner must be the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for the child/children for whom they are claiming for •Funded Early Learning (FEL) payments are to be applied first to the cost of any sessions. •The other parent is unable to provide childcare, for example they are also in education/ work or are absent 	<p>- Students need to be aged 19 years or older as of 31.08.2021</p>

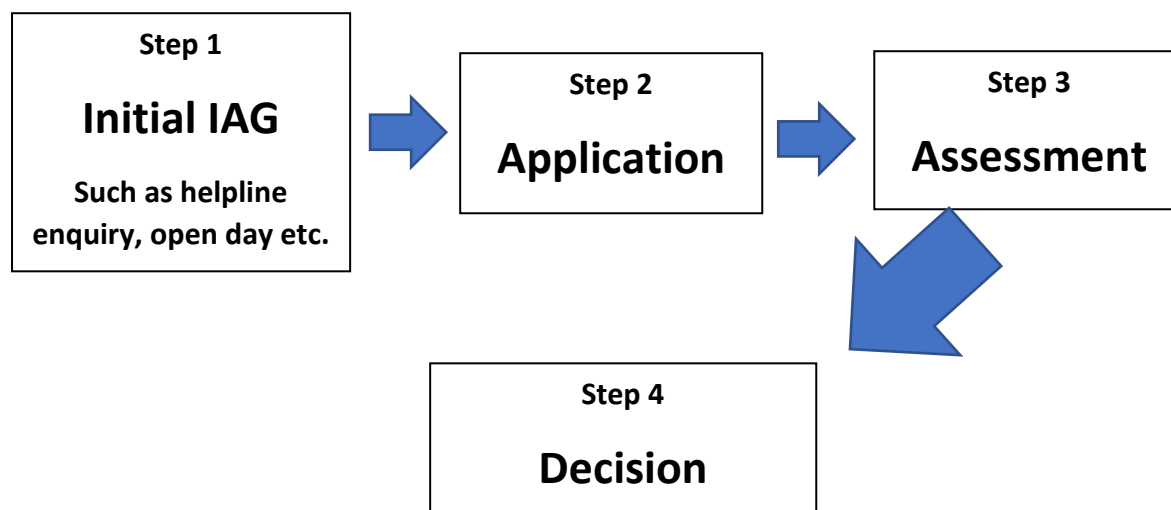
Advanced Learner Loan Bursary		
Support Available	Eligibility Criteria	Age
<p>Students will be placed into priority banding dependent on Household income and will receive between 75-90% support towards the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel support • Childcare Support • Tuition Fees* • Professional registrations or Memberships • Equipment • Kit • Uniform • Books • Essential field Trips • Meals • Hardship (subject to a panel assessment) <p>Where equipment, kit, books and uniform costs are not paid direct to the department- students will be expected to pay upfront for these and provide receipts for reimbursement.</p>	<p>This fund is available to students who have successfully been awarded an Advanced Learner loan and who have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Household Income up to £35,000 • Receive Income Support • Receive Income Based JSA or Employment Support Allowance • Receive the Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit • Receive Universal Credit • Students who demonstrate that they are facing financial hardship <p>Where possible, support will be paid in kind, however should any direct payments be granted- these will be paid on a fortnightly basis and subject to 85% attendance.</p> <p>For childcare support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Childcare must be provided by a OFSTED registered provider •Learner must be the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for the child/children for whom they are claiming for •Funded Early Learning (FEL) payments are to be applied first to the cost of any sessions. •The other parent is unable to provide childcare, for example they are also in education/ work or are absent 	<p>- Students need to be aged 19 years or older as of 31.08.2021</p>

10. PROCEDURE

This section sets out the top-level procedure and service standards that students can expect. Other specific information is identified in the guidance section of this policy.

Student Support Fund Application and Assessment Process

The application and assessment process is based on four key stages shown in the flowchart below.



Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Prospective and current students are encouraged to find out more about the Financial Support Fund before submitting an application.

They can do this via the following methods:

- Online via the college website: <http://www.blc.ac.uk/funding-finance/funding-bursaries-loans>
- Contacting the Student Money and Rights Adviser
- Attending a College open day
- Linking with the Learner Journey Teams

Application

Financial Support Fund applications can be submitted from July each year. Early applications are advised.

Applications can be completed via the following method:

- Online via the college website via the link below:

- <http://www.blc.ac.uk/funding-finance/funding-bursaries-loans>
- Paper based application forms will only be issued in exceptional circumstances and can be requested on T: 01298 330 817:
- Completed paper based application forms can be dropped in at any college campus or returned via post to Financial Support Fund Team, Clarendon House, Buxton and Leek College, Devonshire Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6RY
- Applications must be supported with the documentary evidence requested
- All applications submitted will be acknowledged within 48 hours of the application received date

Assessment

- Assessments will be carried out within 21 working days of the application-received date for all applications that have all the required evidence included.
- If an application requires additional evidence, students are required to submit this evidence within 10 working days.
- Application decisions will be confirmed within 10 working days of the application processing date.
- Application decisions and awards will be communicated via the following methods:
 - Email – Unimail account only
 - Text
 - Letter

Reasons for not approving an application

A Financial Support Fund application may not be approved for the following reasons:

- Student does not meet the eligibility criteria or does not provide the necessary supporting evidence required
- Student does not meet the College standards in terms of attendance and behaviour

Application appeals and complaints

Students have the right to appeal a decision. This must be made in writing to The Financial Support Fund Panel here:

Funding Appeals Panel
 Student Money and Rights Team Buxton
 University of Derby
 1 Devonshire Road
 Buxton
 Derbyshire SK17 6RY

Cashless Payments

The college policy is to operate a cashless payment system where possible for all Students, the table below shows how this applies to the Financial Support Fund payments:

Support Type	Cashless Payment Procedure
Transport- Bus Pass	Internal Transfer from Financial Support Fund to Transport department
Meal support	Students studying onsite at Buxton and Leek - issued with a meal card for use in the cafeterias
Childcare	Childcare provides invoices to the college directly
Equipment	Internal Transfer from Financial Support Fund to the relevant department
Kit/ Uniform	Internal Transfer from Financial Support Fund to the relevant department
Essential Field Trips	Internal Transfer from Financial Support Fund to the relevant department
Tuition Fees	Internal Transfer from Financial Support Fund to the relevant department

Key Information for All Student Support Funds

- Awards are made on a first come first served basis
- When the Funds have been exhausted, no further awards will be made
- Each application is considered individually and assessed against the relevant eligibility criteria
- Awards are designed to contribute towards the main costs incurred by students but may not cover all requirements.
- Any student found to have made a false claim will be subject to the College's Disciplinary Procedure or referral to Police in extreme cases. Buxton and Leek College reserves the right to invoice students who leave College before completing

their studies for repayments of any funds allocated to them. The student may also be asked to return any items of equipment, uniform or protective clothing.

- Initial assessment of applications and all ongoing support will include an overview of attendance and behaviour. If a student fails to meet College standards for attendance (85%) and behaviour, a review would be triggered through the Learner Journey Team to determine whether further financial support should be reduced or stopped.
- If an award is to be paid by BACS transfer, the account must be in the student's own name.
- The college will operate a student hardship fund at its discretion for all students.