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Student Financial Support Policy (FE)	LS006	5	
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Corporation	13 July 2022	13 July 2023	
LEAD PERSON	Group Head of Advice and Admissions		
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## FE STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT POLICY

### Policy Statement

Activate Learning empowers students to participate in education and to complete their programme successfully. We recognise that money issues can be a significant barrier to participation and attendance, particularly for the most vulnerable students.

We use the group’s annual allocation of Discretionary Bursary Funds to administer the following Activate Learning Bursary Schemes which provide financial support to students most in need.

- Travel Bursary
- Course Costs Bursary
- Bursary for Vulnerable Groups
- Meal Credits
- Childcare Bursary
- Accommodation Bursary

### Purpose

To provide clarity for staff and students about how Activate Learning uses its allocation of Discretionary Bursary funds and Bursaries for Vulnerable Groups during the 2022/23 academic year and to signpost to the relevant procedures.

### Scope

This policy applies to all Further Education (FE) students, who have been fee assessed as a ‘home’ student, aged 16 or above on the 31 August and enrolled at Activate Learning or its subcontracted provision. This excludes apprenticeship students and students aged 14 and 15.

In 2022/23 Activate Learning Bursaries are open to students whose household income is:

- £25,000 or less if 16-18
- £30,000 or less if 19 or over

### Definitions and Acronyms

<b>Bursary</b>	A grant. Funds awarded to a student to enable them to study at college
<b>DWP</b>	Department for Work and Pensions – Government department responsible for welfare, pensions, and child maintenance
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>HMRC</b>	Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs – the tax authority for the UK
<b>Home Status</b>	‘Home’ status means the student has met the required residency criteria. For more Information on fee status please follow this link <a href="#">UKCISA - international student advice and guidance - England: FE fee status</a>
<b>Completed applications</b>	Applications which include all the required evidence for processing and are signed.
<b>EHCP</b>	Education, Health and Education Care Plan

## Commitment Statement

### Activate Learning will:

1. Review and update the Activate Learning bursary schemes each year once our annual allocation is known. This review covers eligibility criteria, student financial support procedures and application forms.
2. Follow Government guidance on how the funds are distributed, ensuring they are used in the most effective and efficient way possible to support the maximum number of eligible students.
3. Carry out a financial assessment for each student to establish their household income, whether there is an actual financial need and what kinds of costs the student has to participate in their course
4. Publish clear and accurate information about the bursary schemes and actively promote these to new and continuing students across multiple platforms and throughout all stages of the learner journey:
  - throughout the admissions process
  - via our websites
  - social media
  - prospectuses
  - leaflets
  - open event advice sessions
  - targeted communications via email, phone, SMS.
5. Promote Government run financial support schemes, such as Care to Learn.
6. Provide a user-friendly application form.
7. Send clear and accurate communication including conditions of each scheme. Communications will be sent via email. Emails will also be sent to parents/ emergency contacts for students aged up to 17 on 31 August 2022. If students do not wish emails to be sent to parents/emergency contacts, please write to the Student Support Manager to let them know.
8. Treat all bursary applications as confidential and ensure that all records are stored securely in line with the [Privacy and Data Protection Policy](#)
9. Process applications fairly on a first come first served basis and aim to confirm the outcome of any application within four weeks of a completed application being received.
10. Take individual circumstances and financial needs to participate in their course into consideration when making decisions, including the number of children living in the household.
11. Signpost students to the Student Support Team if they cannot access evidence of their financial need, or if they have extenuating circumstances and need a supporting statement for their application.
12. Award bursary funds from the date the student received confirmation of their award.
13. Provide support in kind where possible and by the most cost-effective means.
14. Provide Travel Bursary support to students who move home mid academic year to support their continued studies, up to a maximum value of £800 and providing funds are still available.
15. Awards towards course fees are considered on an individual basis and will be at a value of 50% of the total fees initially but could be more depending on the students' financial need.
16. Bursary funds are limited and cannot be guaranteed.
17. The bursary fund will close when all the bursary funds have been allocated and students will be added to a waiting list. If we identify additional bursary funds applications on the waiting list will be processed in the order which they were received.
18. Provide an opportunity, if an applicant is dissatisfied with the service provided, to make a complaint through our feedback processes. See Comments, Suggestions and Complaints Policy.
19. Provide an opportunity for students to appeal a decision within seven days of receipt of the application decision. Once the appeal has been considered by the panel of senior managers and a decision has been communicated, there is no further right of appeal.

## General Eligibility

Students must be:

- Enrolled on a funded further education programme and have right to study; this excludes apprentices and students aged 14 and 15.
- Fee assessed as a 'Home' student for the purposes of further education funding, this is the same as it is for enrolment fee eligibility.
- Residents of Wales – students who live in Wales and travel to study at an English institution, should approach their home local authority to make an application for Welsh EMA. Students may also apply to their English institution for help from the 16-19 Bursary fund discretionary bursary but are not eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups.
- Residents of Scotland – students who live in Scotland and travel to study at an English institution, should approach their home local authority in Scotland to make an application for Scottish

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). These students are not eligible to apply for support from the 16-19 Bursary fund.

- Students who are enrolling to a course that is eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan must have confirmation their loan has been fully approved before applying, evidence of their approved loan is required to support their application. We do not support learners with their tuition fee if the course is eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan.
- Students who are eligible for 16-18 funded bursaries are aged 16-18 on 31st August 2022 or be aged 19 and continuing the same course /programme they began when aged 16 to 18 or aged 19-25 with an EHCP.
- Students on a 16-19 funded course will have a Net income of £25,000 or less, students on a 19+ funded course will have a Net income of £30,000 or less.
- Asylum seekers are eligible for bursaries providing they meet the general eligibility criteria; evidence of their household income is not required.

Specific eligibility relating to each Bursary please see Student Bursary Procedure.

## Responsibilities

### Group Student Finance Team are responsible for:

- Administering the student finance application and awarding process.
- Communicating awards and payment schedules by email to students, including parents of students aged 16 and 17.
- Processing bursary payments.
- Monitoring attendance and withdrawals and adjusting bursary payments as required.
- Placing a stop on smart travel cards if students withdraw.

### The Student/Applicant is responsible for:

- Providing accurate information and evidence to support their application
- Signing their application form, agreeing to the conditions of their award as detailed in each award confirmation email.
- Meeting a minimum attendance of 90%
- Adhering to the Student Behaviour Policy
- Attending the nearest college providing their programme
- Repaying funds paid to them if they have not spent them for the reasons for which they were awarded.
- Informing the DWP about any financial support payments they receive, as these payments may affect their eligibility to receive some benefits.
- Providing receipts for meals purchased and / travel half termly on public transport if awarded expense payments.
- Paying their residential accommodation fees if they transfer from a specialist subject to a non-specialist subject mid-year or if they withdraw. Bursary funds will only be used to pay for accommodation up to the date of transfer or withdrawal.
- Returning their travel pass, equipment and books bought using bursary funds if they withdraw from college.
- Covering the cost of attending college until they have provided a complete bursary application and received confirmation that their bursary application has been successful as bursary funds are not back dated.

## Procedure and Forms

- [FE Student Bursary Procedure](#)
- Student Bursary Scheme and Application Form (16-18)
- Student Bursary Scheme and Application Form (19+)

## Government Guidance

- [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2022 to 2023 academic year - GOV.UK](#)
- [Free meals in further education funded institutions guide 2022 to 2023 academic year - GOV.UK](#)
- [Residential Bursary Fund 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK](#)
- [Adult education budget \(AEB\) funding rules 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK](#)
- [Advanced Learner Loans funding rules 2022 to 2023](#)

- [Care to Learn Guide for the 2022 to 2023 academic year - GOV.UK](#)

#### **Linked policies**

- [Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy](#)
- [Admissions Policy](#)
- [Privacy and Data Protection](#)
- [Student Attendance and Absence Management Procedures](#)