

FE STUDENT FINANCE SUPPORT POLICY For the Academic Year 2017-2018



The purpose of this policy is to explain what funding might be available to help you with the essential costs associated with coming to College. It will explain the eligibility requirements for accessing that funding and the application and award process.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to any learner studying on one of our Further Education courses who meets the eligibility requirements described in Appendix 1 or 2.

Policy Statement

This funding is designed to support those students most in need of financial support, to enable them to engage in education or training. All Student Finance schemes are provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The ESFA publish national guidance that sets out the criteria for all the types of funding that we offer. We will look at any application in line with the national guidance. Where funding permits, we will try to support changes in your personal and/or household finances. Any discretionary award will be made on a first come first served basis and will be subject to the funding that is made available from the Government. **Funding should not be assumed and cannot be guaranteed.**

Where a Student Finance award is given, your attendance at College will be monitored by the Student Finance Team and payment will be made in accordance with a number of attendance criteria, as set out in the Procedure.

Background information

The 16-18 Bursary, Discretionary Learner Support Fund (dLSF) and Advanced Learner Loan (ALL) Bursary can provide some financial assistance with the costs associated with coming to College. They are government funded and are designed to assist a priority target group of learners who are socially or economically disadvantaged.

The Government's College Meal Support scheme is designed for students aged between 16-18 years old, or students with a Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan aged up to 25 years, who meet the national criteria. This scheme provides these students with one meal a day while they are studying.

Roles and responsibilities

- As a student of The College you will be expected to agree to our terms and conditions.
- It is your responsibility to fully complete all parts of the application form to ensure that there is no delay with the assessment process.
- The Student Finance Team will process your application and send you a notification email or letter within 10 working days of receiving your fully completed application.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you attend college in order to fulfil the attendance requirements of your Student Finance award.
- The Student Finance Team will make the Wellbeing Team aware of all 16-18 Vulnerable Bursaries that have been granted. The Wellbeing Team will monitor and feedback information on vulnerable students' attendance.

Links to College values and other College policies

You should also read our Fee Payment Policy and College Regulations Policy, available on the College website at the following location <https://www.thecollege.co.uk/about-us/college-information/college-policies>

Who needs to understand this policy and how will they know about it?

The following training and awareness will be put in place:

Who?	How?
Students	Student Finance Support Policy available on the College website. Reference made to the Policy throughout the application and enrolment process – at College Open Events, during interview, in offer letters, invitation to enrol letter, at enrolment.
College managers	Include in CMT bulletin
All teaching staff	Briefing by Directors of Learning; 'All Staff' e-mail; visits by Student Finance staff to team meetings if requested.
Business Support staff who interact with students	Briefing by line managers; copies of the policy to be distributed.

PROCESS / PROCEDURE

Am I eligible for an award?

The attached flowchart in Appendix 1 will explain whether or not you are eligible for financial assistance under these government schemes. Appendix 2 details a list of acceptable evidence that needs to be provided.

How do I apply?

We use one application form for all the finance support schemes mentioned in this Policy. The form has been designed using feedback from students and staff to ensure that it is clear and accessible. You can get a copy of the application form and policy from The Link at our North Road and Lansdowne campuses, or electronically from my**bpc** and the College website. The form is also available in different formats to meet individual student needs.

1. Once you have confirmed from the flowchart that you are eligible for funding, complete an application form. This can be emailed to Student Finance (studentfinance@bpc.ac.uk) or hand it into The Link. Make sure that you have fully completed all parts of the form to avoid any unnecessary delays in processing your application. You will also need to supply the required form(s) of evidence with your application – see Appendix 3 for acceptable forms of evidence.
2. All applications will be processed and a notification email or letter sent within 10 working days of the fully completed form being received. This notification will either confirm the award that has been given, or it will inform you that we are holding the application and will clearly explain what further action you need to take to enable your application to be processed.
3. Any discretionary award will be made on a first come first served basis and will be subject to the funding that is made available from the government. **Funding should not be assumed and cannot be guaranteed.**
4. Payment decisions regarding your award will be notified to you by text, using your contact details on our Student Management Information system.

How will I receive the funding?

Payment will only be made directly to you if you are in receipt of the 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary. In this case, payment can only be made directly into your bank account. The Finance team will process the payment and send you confirmation. No other Student Finance scheme will make a payment directly to a student. Instead, we will pay the service supplier direct – for example, the travel company, uniform supplier or nursery. College Meal Support awards will be delivered via the College cafeteria.

Due to Data Protection requirements, if you are aged over 18 you will need to give written consent to the Student Finance Team to discuss matters relating to your award, either verbally or in writing, with a third party.

What are the attendance requirements?

Attendance will be monitored by the Student Finance Team for all Student Finance awards given. Payment will be made in accordance with the following criteria.

- For any 16-18 Bursary awards the central College register system will be used to monitor the monthly attendance thresholds, as follows:
 - 80% attendance or better = 100% of monthly award paid
 - 50-79% attendance = 50% of monthly award paid
 - 49% attendance or below = no payment will be made
- Attendance is monitored for all 19+ dLSF and ALL awards **for assistance with childcare** and there is a minimum expectation of 80% attendance each month for payment to be made.

If you are in receipt of a 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary the Wellbeing Team will monitor and feedback information on your attendance. Any changes to be made in your payments will be discretionary depending on individual circumstances.

How do I appeal a Student Finance decision?

If you (or your parent/guardian or carer) wishes to make an appeal regarding any aspect of Student Finance, this should be put in writing to the Student Services Manager within 14 working days of receipt of your award letter. A member of the Student Services Team can help you with this if you need assistance. Your appeal will be reviewed by the Student Services Manager. You will receive a written response within 5 working days confirming the outcome of your appeal. The appeal decision will be final.

What can I do if I am unhappy with the service I have received?

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the service you have received from the Student Finance Team, please record your issues / concerns on the College 'Complaints and Concerns' form which is available from our main reception areas, and hand the completed form to a Receptionist. Your issues / concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the College Complaints Policy and Procedure on my**bpc**. Copies are also available from main reception areas.

Policy approved by: Senior Leadership Team

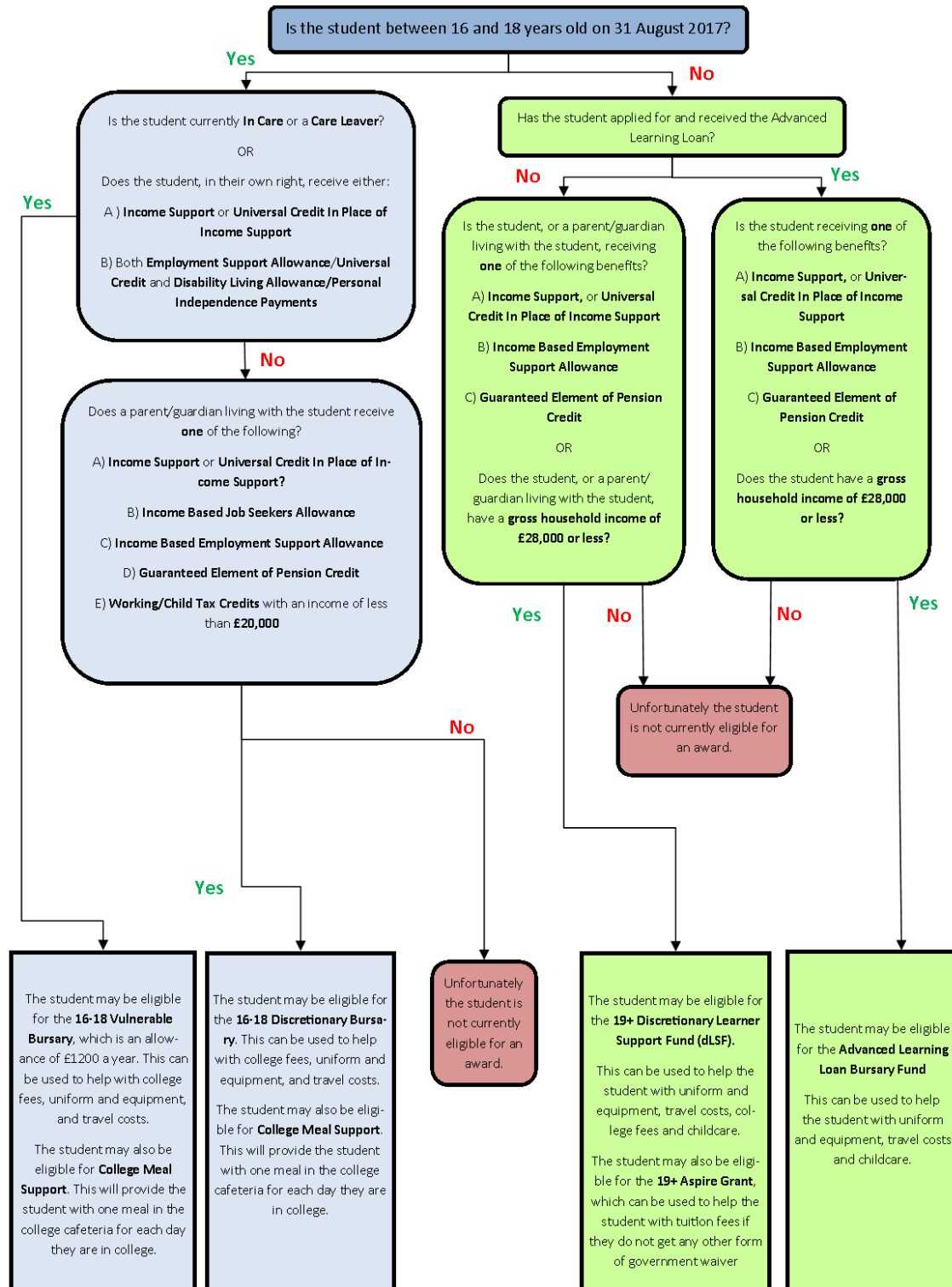
Date:

This Policy is due for review in July 2018.

Appendix 1

STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT 2017-18

Eligibility Information—Remember, funding cannot be assumed or guaranteed.



Appendix 2

To apply for financial support, you must send in a photocopy of evidence required with this application.

16-18 Vulnerable Bursary and College Meals Scheme Criteria and Evidence Required	
Currently in or Leaving Care	Letter/email confirming status from Social Worker or Welfare Team at The College
Receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit (in place of Income Support, in the student's own right)	Letter confirming that the student is receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, dated within 6 months
Receiving both Employment Support Allowance/ Universal Credit and Disability Living Allowance/ Personal Independence Payments, in the student's own right	Letter confirming that the student is receiving both Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit, and Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments, dated within 6 months

16-18 Discretionary Bursary and College Meals Scheme Criteria and Evidence Required	
Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support	Letter confirming Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, dated within 6 months
Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)	Letter confirming Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, dated within 6 months
Employment Support Allowance (Income Based), or Universal Credit in place of Employment and Support Allowance	Letter confirming Employment Support Allowance, or Universal Credit in place of Employment and Support Allowance, dated within 6 months
State Pension Credit (Guaranteed Element)	Letter confirming the Guaranteed Element of the State Pension Credit, dated within 6 months
Working/Child Tax Credit (Income less than £20,000)	All pages of the Working/Child Tax Credit document for tax year 2017/18

Over 19 Discretionary Learner Support Fund / Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Fund Criteria and Evidence Required	
Student/Parent is in receipt of:	
Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support	Letter confirming Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, dated within 6 months
Employment Support Allowance (Income Based), or Universal Credit in place of Employment and Support	Letter confirming Employment Support Allowance, or Universal Credit in place of Employment and Support
State Pension Credit (Guaranteed Element)	Letter confirming the Guaranteed Element of the State Pension Credit, dated within 6 months
Gross Earned Household income (Less than £28,000)	Evidence of P60 or Working Tax Credits for tax year 2017/18. Under exceptional circumstances 3 months consecutive wage slips will be accepted.