

Policy for Learners Applying for Financial Support through the Lowestoft College 16-18 Bursary Scheme 2011-12

The Lowestoft College Bursary 16-18 scheme is designed to help support those young people who face the greatest barriers to continuing in education or training post 16. This cash limited fund is aimed at students whose circumstances mean they have difficulties in affording their learning costs, and applies to expenses arising during the current academic year. Students are advised on how to apply to the scheme at interview and/or enrolment. It is recommended that students apply early for assistance as once funds are used up no further support can be awarded.

This Policy may be amended on occasions, for example in response to changes communicated from the Young People Learning Agency (YPLA) or other local factors. The policy may not remain as described for future years e.g. 2012-13

Priorities of the Fund

The key priority of the Government is to eliminate the gap in attainment between those from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, to ensure every young person participates and benefits from a place in 16-18 education and training.

The Scheme is made up of two parts:

- Priority 1 – Those learners identified as in the ‘nominated vulnerable group’ as defined by guidelines from the YPLA will be eligible for a bursary of £1200 a year also known as the ‘guaranteed bursary’. This includes young people in care, care leavers, young people receiving income support, and disabled young people receiving both Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance
- Priority 2 - Other students who need financial support to help them stay in education and training may also be able to claim a bursary to help with the costs of transport, food, equipment and other course related costs.

Eligibility Criteria

An application to the fund does not guarantee an offer of assistance unless you are in the priority 1 learner group, as all applications are considered on an individual basis while taking into account the amount of funding available. The Learner Adviser, Welfare is available in Learner Services for further guidance.

Guidelines are given below:

- **Age** - Students aged 16-18 years or over on 1st September of the academic year.
- **Course** - Students who have been accepted onto, and are studying, a programme of learning funded by the YPLA at Lowestoft College. If applicable, the course shows progression from a previous course studied.

The following students **are not** eligible for assistance: Work-Based Learning (WBL) courses including waged Apprenticeships; HE Degree programmes. Prisoners on day release are not eligible.

- **Income** - Students on a low-income or from a low-income family. This includes partner’s or step-parent’s income. The threshold for eligibility for 2010/2011 is a gross household income of **less than £16,190 per year**.

Parental income will be assessed where a student is aged less than 19 years and living in the parental home. The student’s own income will be assessed as well as any partner’s income if they do not live in the parental home.

As all applications to the Fund are means’-tested; the student must give details of income on the application form, and submit evidence of income with the application. **Evidence can be your 2010-11 Tax Credit Award Notification, three recent pay slips, P60, evidence of self employment income or letter from official sources such as the Jobcentre, Benefits Agency or an employer.**

Students requiring further information on whether payments will affect their benefit position should obtain advice from their local Benefits Agency office.

- **Receipt of other Financial Support**
Students can receive other support such as through transitional arrangements through the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme*, but income from this funding will be taken into account. Evidence of this may be requested.

- **Attendance on Course**

Support is only maintained if the successful applicant maintains good attendance (a minimum of 90%) in accordance with the College's Attendance Policy and shows commitment to their studies through good effort and behaviour. To monitor this, the administrator will liaise with course tutors. The College may request a refund of monies paid if the student does not maintain good attendance and commitment, or withdraws from the course.

- **Residency Status**

The College has to abide by the residence conditions set by the Government. These rules are complex and further advice can be given by the Learner Adviser, Welfare in Learner Services. Evidence of a student's residency status may be required, such as passport and/or other clear evidence of length of stay in UK. Brief guidelines are given below on the residence conditions:

- A student who on the first day of their course is "settled" in the UK, and has been ordinarily resident in the UK for the three years preceding, and whose main purpose for such residence was not to receive full-time education during any part of the three-year period. "Settled" means having either indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/R) or having the right of abode in the UK.
- The spouse or civil partner of a person with recently "settled" status who has been both married (or has undertaken a recognised civil partnership) and has been resident in the UK for 1 year.
- A national of any European Union (EU) country (or the spouse or civil partner or child of an EU National) who has been ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area (EEA) for the three years preceding the first date of the course.
- An EEA migrant worker (or the spouse or civil partner or child of such a person) who has been ordinarily resident in the EEA for the three years preceding the start of the course.
- Anyone who has been granted Refugee status, Humanitarian Protection (HP) or Discretionary Leave (DL), or exceptional leave to enter or remain (ELE/ELR) by the UK Government, who has remained ordinarily resident in the UK since so recognised, (or the spouse or civil partner or child of such a person).
- Asylum seekers aged 16–18 (over 19 year olds are not eligible).
- There are some additional eligibility rules for 16–18 year olds who have entered the UK recently. Further advice must be requested from the Learner Adviser, Welfare.

This list is not exhaustive and further advice should be sought from the Learner Adviser, Welfare in Learner Services who may contact the YPLA about individual cases.

Award Decisions

The level of bursary you are awarded will depend on:

- If you are identified as a priority 1 learner
- The level of your annual household income
- The distance you have to travel to College
- The cost of your course equipment, materials and other course costs
- Available funding
- Other funding you may receive through the transitional EMA arrangements

For priority 1 learners you will receive your guaranteed bursary to cover course costs.

For priority 2 learners your award is split in 2 parts – the annual bursary award and a discretionary award to contribute to equipment and other course costs

Should unexpected costs arise that you are unable to afford during the academic year you can make a separate application, in writing, for discretionary assistance. Additional award decisions will be made by the Head of Learner Services and the Learner Adviser for Welfare.

Course costs could include Transport

Local Authority Discretionary Subsidised Transport Scheme

Both Norfolk and Suffolk County Council offer discretionary subsidised transport schemes for students who live more than 3 miles from the College.

Terms and conditions apply including a charge for any travel pass issued for term time travel.

To get more information about the schemes including how to apply:

For students living in Suffolk

online: www.csduk.com

Tel: 08456 066 173

For students living in Norfolk

online: www.norfolk.gov.uk/post16transport

Tel: 0344 800 8020

Other transport options

There are transport links to Lowestoft from surrounding areas through First and Anglian buses along with Network Rail services. Consideration should be given to the cost of paying for transport at the usual public bus and train fares in relation to the cost of a Local Authority pass.

Materials Fees – students are advised about these costs which are payable at enrolment.

Books & Equipment – e.g. uniforms, kits, essential course materials (not ordinary stationery items).

Where books and non-consumable equipment are funded 100% by the College Bursary Scheme these items remain the property of the College and must be returned at the end of the course.

Other assistance available – application will also be considered for support towards:

- The cost of attending essential work placements or course trips – a letter of support must be submitted by the tutor giving dates and costs.
- University interviews and travel costs – written support must be submitted by the tutor giving dates and costs.
- Disability related costs – please specify, using an additional sheet if necessary, together with costs.
- Hardship payment towards living/accommodation costs in exceptional circumstances
- Support with domestic emergencies
- Other types of assistance can be requested and considered by the LSF Awards Committee if a letter is submitted outlining the circumstances and costs.

Childcare Assistance - Students under the age of 20 when they start their course can apply for assistance with the cost of childcare through the Care to Learn scheme. Please see the Learner Adviser, Welfare for more information or, alternatively, visit www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn or contact the Learner Support helpline direct on 0800 121 8989.

Payments to Students

Payments will be made half-termly to contribute towards costs that arise during these periods. Notification of a payment schedule will be issued with the notice of entitlement.

All payments from the Learner Support Fund are required to be paid **directly to the learner**, by bank transfer. We cannot make payments by cheque or to someone else's bank account. Learners are therefore required to have their own bank account.

Bank details are required on the mandate form provided along with proof of the bank account (statement or letter from the bank) with name & address of account holder, account number and sort code.

If the learner needs to open a bank account to accept payments, this should not let this delay the submission of an application. However any payments awarded cannot be made until we receive these details.

Failure to provide correct bank details may result in a delay to payments.

Payments are dependent on attendance and commitment to the course. This is monitored.

Learners are required to take responsibility for their own expenditure of the College Bursary Awarded.

Signing of the Declaration

The declaration will need to be signed by the student and parent/guardian/carer or in the case of a 16-18 year old student living independently, an appropriate professional person. An appropriate professional person could be, for example, Social Worker, Support Worker, Member of Local Authority or Member of a housing trust.

Procedure for Appeals

Students are advised in writing of the award offer and of the reasons if they are not made any offer. They can appeal against this decision. Appeals should be in writing, addressed to the Learner Adviser, Welfare in Learner Services. The Learner Adviser will acknowledge receipt of the appeal to the student and will advise the Head of Learner Services of the appeal. The Head of Learner Services will arrange a meeting with a senior manager who was not involved in the original decision to discuss the appeal. Normally, this would be the Assistant Principal for Quality Improvement and Learner Services. The Head of Learner Services and the Learner Adviser, Welfare will attend this meeting. The decision made at this appeal meeting will be final and the student will be advised of the outcome and the reasons that the appeal was upheld or rejected.

In some cases, the Head of Learner Services may decide to arrange an appointment with the student to discuss the appeal.

If you have any queries about the 16-18 Bursary Scheme, please contact the Learner Adviser, Welfare in Learner Services, 01502 525124, v.brown@lowestoft.ac.uk

*** Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)**

EMA is no longer available to new applicants. If, however you received EMA in 2010-11, are 16, 17 or 18 and are returning to study this academic year you may still be eligible to receive support through weekly EMA payments subject to terms and conditions of payment.

That is, if you have been receiving EMA since 2009-10 at a level of £10, £20 or £30 you could continue to receive EMA at the same weekly level for one more academic year in 2011-12.

If you received EMA for the first time last year (2010-11) at a level of £30 per week, you could continue to receive EMA at a level of £20 per week for one more academic year in 2011-12.

All other learners aged 16-18 will not be eligible for EMA.

This Policy is available in alternative formats.
Please contact Human Resources for further information on extension 5076 or 5077