


Student Bursaries & Financial Support Policy 2018-19

Effective for employees, students, governors and volunteers September 2018

Overall responsibility:	Principal
Implementation:	Head of Student Services
Date issued:	September 2018
Date for review:	September 2019
Endorsed and approved by P&SG:	 (signature)
	Pat Brennan-Barrett Principal

Student Bursaries & Financial Support Policy 2018-19

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Student Bursaries & Financial Support Policy 2018-19

1. Introduction/overview:

Northampton College receives an allocation of funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to support eligible students to meet the costs of participating in education.

The ESFA publish guidelines which set out the criteria for the use of these funds.

Eligible students will be required to show supporting evidence that they meet the required criteria. In certain exceptional circumstances, Northampton College may exercise its ability to make discretionary awards.

2. Information

Northampton College provides information about and promotes access to financial support via information leaflets, the college website, at interviews and at promotional events i.e. open evenings and schools liaison events.

An application form is available on the college website or can be collected from student services with prior arrangement.

3. Eligibility criteria

All students aged 16 and over and who meet the residency criteria set out in national funding guidance and are studying an ESFA funded course are eligible to apply. Waged apprentices are not eligible.

4. Assessing eligibility

All applicants will be asked to complete an application form - these are available on the college website or from student services on request.

All new applicants will be sent details on applying in their pre enrolment pack. Assistance with completing the application form is available from Student Services.

Previous applicants entering an additional year at college will be asked to complete a bespoke application form confirming that the household income remains the same and where required, asked to provide additional information to evidence this.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund, 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund and Advanced Learner Loans Bursaries are means-tested and applicants will be required to provide evidence to verify total household income. Students applying through the Advanced Learner Loan Bursaries for Additional Learning Support costs ONLY will not be means tested.

Students aged 19 or over who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are eligible for the 16-19 bursary. Applicants will be required to provide a copy of an up to date EHCP to access support if not already held by the college.

Priority for support will be given to those students with a household income of under £26,000 per annum gross increased by £2000 (per additional child) where three or more children aged under 18 are in full time education. The college may choose to use its discretion where household income is £30,000 and it is identified that support is needed.

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, bank or building society statements, wage slips, self-assessment tax form and other documents.

If your income is higher but you are in hardship you can still apply and your case will be considered, however, a supporting statement and evidence of serious financial difficulties must be included.

Students aged 16 – 19 in defined vulnerable groups are entitled to a bursary of up to £1200 where a financial need and relevant costs are identified (pro-rata according to length of course and hours of attendance). The defined vulnerable groups are:

- Students in the care of the Local Authority including unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- Students leaving care
- Students living independently and in receipt of Income Support or the equivalent Universal Credit (and can provide a letter from DWP evidencing that they are allowed to enter full time study as well as a tenancy agreement or child benefit letter for a dependent)
- Students in receipt of both Disability Living Allowance (or the new Personal Independence Payment) and Employment Support Allowance (or Universal Credit as a replacement for ESA)

In some cases, a student might be eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups however, their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant costs. Meeting the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups does not automatically mean funding will be given.

Students who believe they qualify for the £1200 bursary are required to provide evidence of their care status or benefits as above to support their application

5. Help towards meeting 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 direct delivery teams regarding course related costs.

The 16 – 19 Bursary Fund and the 19+ discretionary Learner Support Fund and Advanced Learner Loans Bursary 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.

Where trips are supported payment will be made through internal transfers only.

Funds will be made payable directly to the equipment or uniform provider where possible. Where paid to the student, a cheque will be raised for collection from Student Services. **It is not possible to make payments to family members or guardians however exemptions may apply where an applicant to the bursary is formally assessed as not having the capacity to manage their own financial affairs.**

All items purchased by the support funds remain the property of the college and must be returned if students do not complete their course.

6. Help towards travel costs

Bursary funds for students aged 16-18 will be administered in conjunction with Local Authority Transport Scheme's and Policies. In most cases, Bursary funds will be used to provide additional financial support where transport costs are not met in full or present a barrier to learning.

Support through bursary funds with the cost of travel is available to students who travel more than three miles to their site of study or work placement. Distance will be calculated using the shortest safe walking distance as identified on Google maps. Exceptional circumstances and Special Educational Needs that do not meet the Local Authority Transport Policy will be considered during assessment and through the appeals procedure where necessary.

Travel support will usually be in the form of a bus pass however the college will exercise discretion on this decision where another form of support is deemed more suitable or cost effective.

Students receiving financial support with the cost of travel will be invited to apply for the provision of a bicycle, lights and a helmet. This provision will replace all alternative means of transportation for the duration of their time at college.

The college will support transport costs during term time only.

7. Help towards meals

Students aged 16-18 at the beginning of the academic year who live in a household that is in receipt of one of the benefits below are entitled to free college meals on days they attend study or activity that is part of their course. (i.e. work experience).

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Universal Credit with an income less than £7400 per annum
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Support under part IV of the immigration an Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed Element of 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 Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
- Aged 19-24 with a valid EHCP

Meals provided will not exceed a maximum value of £2.41 per day and in most cases will be supplied through the college's catering outlets. Where this arrangement is not possible, alternative arrangements will be made.

Students aged of 19 at the beginning of the academic year are not eligible to apply for help with Further education free meals.

8. Help towards 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. Student Services staff can help with applications to Care to Learn.

Students aged over 20 can apply for support with childcare costs through the Discretionary Learner Support Fund / Advanced Learner Loans Bursary.

Where funding is awarded towards the cost of childcare with a registered provider, the award will only apply to the days on which the course runs. Funds will only be paid to a third party. The third party must be registered with OFSTED as well as the college.

The amount of funding available for childcare is limited and there is no guaranteed entitlement to the funds.

9. Help towards course fees

There are limited funds available to assist with the cost of tuition fees for 19+ learners who are not fully-funded for their course costs. These are only available where exception circumstances can be evidenced.

Students will only be supported where alternative means of financial support are not available and exceptional circumstances can be evidenced.

In exceptional circumstances the college bursary funds may also be help with exam fees. Each application will be considered on its own merit within the college criteria/budget constraints.

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

10. Help towards Additional Learning Support Needs (Advanced Learner Loan students only)

Support through bursary funds with the cost of Additional Learning Support needs is available to students who are formally assessed by the college as needing support with learning. Awards are available each academic year to a maximum award value of £1500 per student however the college reserves its right to consider exceptional levels of need/circumstances.

11. Vulnerable Group Bursaries

Where students are identified as being eligible for a vulnerable group bursary to support relevant costs for education, (to a maximum award level of £1,200) they will be awarded support to cover essential course costs including kit, equipment, and travel (pro-rata for courses less than 30 weeks).

The college will consider all reasonable requests for the balance of an award to be used for additional relevant activities or relevant items that aid the development of a student's education (i.e. enrichment activities/additional books).

Relevant additional costs will be identified by college staff together with the student in receipt of the vulnerable bursary as part of the college support process. (i.e. 1:1's and progress review). Once agreed they will be forwarded to the bursary team for processing using the pro-forma in **Appendix B**.

The college does not support the purchase of personal computers or laptops.

12. Maximum levels of support available

The maximum levels of support for students aged 16-18 are as highlighted below. Student awards are strictly limited to a maximum award level of £5000 per student.

Age	Level of Income	Equipment	Travel	Trips
16-18	Income under £26,000	100%	100%	100%
16-18	Income based benefits	100%	100%	100%
16-18	Income over £26,000	0%	0%	0%
16-18	Further Education Free Meals available to students who meet published criteria in section 6 of this document.			

Students aged 19 or over who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are also eligible for the discretionary bursary.

Students aged over 19 who have previously accessed the 16-18 bursary in the preceding year will be supported using the 16-18 bursary fund.

The college will consider applications from families with an income of £30,000 or under where a need is identified.
Maximum levels of support for students aged 19+:

Age/Study	Level of Income	Equipment	Travel	Course Fees	Learning Support	Childcare	Trips
19+ FT	Income under £26,000	100%	100%	Exceptional Circumstances	0%	100% *	100%
19+ PT	Income under £26,000	100%	100%	Exceptional Circumstances	0%	100% *	100%
Advanced Learner Loans recipients	Income under £26,000	100%	100%	0%	Maximum award of £1500 per year **	100% *	100%

The college will consider applications from families with an income of £30,000 or under where a need is identified.

* *Timetabled hours only. Students in receipt of **Early Years Funding** will have this deducted from their award.*

** *Exceptional need/circumstances will be considered*

13. Administration of the student support fund

All students will be informed of how to apply via their induction letter, at interview, and on the College Website.

Students with special educational needs or under the care of the local authority will be offered 1:1 support with completing the application process if requested/required.

All new students will be invited to attend a pre booked 1:1 meeting with student services staff to discuss and process their application.

Applications must be completed before any awards can be made from the Support Funds.

Up-to-date, valid, supporting evidence must be produced at the time of application. Staff administering the fund will verify the information given on the application form, or ask for further evidence if not sufficient at the time of application.

Applications must be received by Friday October 19th 2018. Applications received after this date may not be processed. The college will maintain a contingency fund for the payment bursaries to students who join the college after this date.

The nature of the award will be set out in the award letter that will be sent to all applicants once their applications have been assessed.

Students will be informed of final decisions at the time of application when a correctly completed application is submitted together with the relevant evidence and a student attends their 1:1 interview.

Applications will be assessed and either approved or refused by at least two members of staff in the Student Services team – including one who is not involved in the assessment process. For monitoring purposes the Head of Student Services will carry out random checking on each completed batch of applications.

Staff administering the fund will examine all applicants' attendance levels no less than once a term. Should an applicant's attendance drop below 90%, their award may be reviewed or adjusted.

Should an applicant withdraw from their chosen course of study and decide to leave college, they may be required to repay monies or return equipment supplied/bought by the support fund.

14. Allocation

Applicants will be notified in person and in writing of the funding that has been awarded. All awards will be paid directly to the third party where possible, or via internal transfers between college cost centres.

In all cases, the application will be judged on its individual merits as outlined in the ESFA guidelines. The amount awarded will be specific to each individual application.

15. Appeals

If any student is dissatisfied with the decision regarding their award, they will be advised to complete an appeal form within 5 days of receipt of their award letter. They should state clear reasons for their appeal and produce supporting evidence if needed. The appeal should be sent to the **Head of Student Services** who will investigate and respond to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal letter. The appeal will be heard by two managers not involved in the initial decision making process.

16. Links to related college policies / procedures.

- Transport Policy 2018/19

(Appendix A)

Date Received (College):

□□ □□ □□□□

Financial Support Appeals Form 2018/19

You have the right to appeal if:

- You believe your application has been assessed incorrectly
- You have **exceptional circumstances** that you wish to be considered. (i.e. medical condition, financial hardship caused by debt relief plan, loss or significant change in employment)

You are unable to appeal if you are simply unhappy with your award. You must meet the essential criteria for assessment or be able to provide evidence of exceptional circumstances. Appeals for additional funding in addition to the maximum award of £5000 per student will not be considered.

Your appeal should be made within 10 working days of receiving either your bursary support meeting or a letter notifying you that you are not eligible for support.

Part 1 – Student Details

Student ID Number:

First Name(s):

Surname:

What are you appealing for?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Transport | <input type="checkbox"/> | Kit & Equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> | Free College Meals | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Tuition Fees | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trips | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Part 2 – Appeal Grounds

Please detail below your grounds for appeal including any exceptional circumstances you wish to be taken into consideration.

Evidence of any exceptional circumstances attached

Applicant Signature:

Date:

Please return this form to **Student Services** at any college centre. You will be advised of the outcome within 10 working days of receipt of this form. **The decision of the appeals panel will be final.**

OFFICE USE ONLY

Assessment

Does the appeal meet the essential criteria for bursary awards? Yes No

Is the student able to evidence exceptional circumstances? Yes No

Outcome of appeal

Appeal upheld? Yes No

Feedback for student (letter)

Unfortunately your appeal does not meet the essential criteria for bursary awards

Unfortunately your appeal does not provide sufficient evidence exceptional circumstances

Offer Instalments (bus pass and fees only)

Other:

Manager 1:

Date:

Manager 2:

Date:

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUEST FORM

This form should be completed by student in receipt of a vulnerable student bursary and with your academic coach, personal tutor or a member of the Student Services team. In all cases, Academic Staff will be consulted as to the appropriateness of the request in supporting your learning.

IMPORTANT: Please refer to our **Bursary and Financial Support Policy** for information on the help we can consider. It is important to note that we cannot provide funding retrospectively neither should you commit to any expenditure pending our decision. We are generally unable to assist where a statutory agency has responsibility for providing the funding.

- *Examples of what we cannot help with include: legal fees, private medical treatment, laptops and PC Purchase, debt repayments (please note that this list is not exhaustive).*
- *Examples of what we can help with include: additional books, additional learning materials, enrichment trips, UCAS fees (please note that this list is not exhaustive).*

Student Name:			
Student ID:		Date of request:	
College staff member request discussed with?			

What do you need extra help with?	How much does it cost?	Who will supply it? (company)	Which member of college staff have you discussed it with?

Please note that even if we can offer financial help, we may not be able to help with everything.

For office use only			
Date:		Signed:	

(Appendix C)

Equality & diversity impact assessment

This form should be used by managers and policy authors within their area of responsibility to carry out Equality & Diversity Impact Assessments (E&DIAs) in relation to protected characteristics including: Age, Sex, Disability, Gender/Trans, Racial or Ethnic Group, Religious Belief and Sexual Orientation.

The word 'policy' is taken to include strategies, policies, procedures and guidance notes; both formal and informal, internal and external.

The Impact Assessment may be carried out on any policy, service, function or plan you are engaged in, or are about to commence. All policies should be clearly stated. However, in reality, some policies are built into everyday procedures and customs, therefore not all policies are open to inspection and review. Any assessment of a policy should include these customs and practices as well as the formal written policy. 'Functions' means your duties and powers and includes internal and external functions, including service delivery.

1. Name of policy

Student Bursaries & Financial Support Policy 2018-19

2. What is the aim(s), objective(s) and/or purpose of the policy?

To ensure appropriate allocation of college support funds.

3. Who is the policy lead?

Mark Owen

4. Which of the following groups could be affected by this policy?

(Tick all that apply)

Students Staff Wider community

5. Team

Names and position of Impact Assessment Team (min of 3 preferably from areas across the College):

Name	Position
Mark Owen	Head of Student Services
Alex Summers	Enrolments Manager
Patrick Leavey	Deputy Principal

Date EDIA undertaken: _____

EDIA undertaken as a result of:

Renewal / Revision of Policy / Procedure

New Policy / Procedure

SAR process

Other Please state _____

Date of last EDIA (if applicable) _____

6. Complaints

Have complaints been received from anyone with one or more protected characteristic about the service provided?
If yes then please give details.

No

7. The Impact

Four possible impacts should be considered as part of the assessment:

1. **Positive impact** – Where the policy might have a positive impact on a particular protected characteristic.
2. **None or little impact** – Where you think a policy does not disadvantage any of the protected characteristics.
3. **Some impact** – Where a policy might disadvantage any of the protected characteristics groups to some extent. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals with protected characteristics is likely to be greater than on another.
4. **Substantial impact** – Where you think that the policy could have a negative impact on any or all of the protected characteristics. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that the negative impact on one particular protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another

Gender/ Age	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
Women		✓		
Men		✓		
Age			✓	

Disability	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
Visually impaired		✓		
Hearing impaired		✓		
Physical disability		✓		
Specific Learning difficulties		✓		
Global learning difficulties		✓		
Autistic Spectrum Disorder		✓		
Any other disability - various		✓		

Race or Culture	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
White		✓		
Other minority groups		✓		

Other Factors	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
Religious Belief		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		

Trans		✓		
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Please comment on any areas where some or substantial impact is indicated. Any resulting actions must be added to the attached action plan.
 Policy has been updated to reflect changes in legislation and procedure. The procedure ensures a fair process is carried out for all staff and as such has a positive impact.

8. Is there anything that cannot be changed?

What cannot be changed?	Can this be justified?	If so, how?
Students aged over 19+ at the start of an academic year are unable to receive support with funding.	Yes	Government provision for Free School Meals funding is made available to students aged 16-18 only.

e.g. Disabled people can be treated more favourably under the 2005 DDA. If a policy appears to treat disabled people more favourably than other equality groups, the disadvantage may be justifiable.

Please list the main actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment in your area of responsibility.
 (Continue on separate sheets as necessary)

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ACTION PLAN FOR INCLUSION IN QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Area for Improvement and expected impact (linked to Corporate Objectives)	N/A
SMART actions/activities	N/A
Staff development or Resources required	N/A
Timescale including Milestones	N/A
Success Indicators and evaluation	N/A

DISTRIBUTION: Copies of the final E&DIA and QIP should be sent to:
 Jan Hutt -Director of HR, Patrick Leavey - Deputy Principal – Teaching, Learning & Success and Gill Ilardo- Quality Improvement Team Administrator

And to those whom this Impact Assessment will cause to have further work to do in either changing processes or re-writing the policy(s) concerned.

All actions recorded here should be carried forward into your QIP, so that actions can be monitored and evaluated to measure the impact. There will be random sampling of action plans through the Equality & Diversity Forum

(Appendix D)

Communications plan

TITLE OF COLLEGE POLICY:	DATE APPROVED BY EMT/CORPORATION:
Student Bursaries & Financial Support Policy 2018-19	

AUDIENCE (select appropriate with v)					
Managers	✓	Curriculum teams	✓	Business Support teams	✓
All staff	✓	Suppliers		Partners	✓
Other (please state)					

CHANNEL (select appropriate with v)					
Policy & Strategy Team (PST)		Quality Improvement Network (QIN)		Marketing team	
e.g. Meeting Email	✓	e.g. Meeting Email	✓	e.g. NC Update Managers' Update Intranet Website	✓ ✓
Individual team		Suppliers		Partners	
e.g. Document Library Noticeboards Team meeting Email	✓	e.g. Letter or email Meeting		e.g. Letter or email Meeting	
College Management Team (CMT)		JCNC		CORPORATION	
e.g. Meeting Email		e.g. Meeting Email	✓ ✓	e.g. Meeting Email	✓

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN ACTIVATED BY:		
Name: Mark Owen	Job title: Head of Student Services	Date: September 2018