

Student Bursary & Discretionary Bursary & Loan Fund Policy (FE & HE)

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Issue Date	20 September 2022	Review Date	20 September 2023

Document Control

Owner	Director of Student Services
Audience	All Moulton College Stakeholders
Confidentiality	Low

Version Control

Version	Description/Changes	By	Date
1.0	Full Review and Release	DSS	July 2020
2.0	Full Review and Release	DSS	08 June 2021
3.0	Full Review and Release	DSS	September 2023

Approval

Approved By	Meeting Date	Next Review
Senior Leadership Team	20 September 2022	20 September 2023

Related Policies and Documents

Ref.	Policy

Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment
The policy has undergone an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) confirming that there are no negative consequences in the case of this policy.

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Policy Statement

Introduction

1. This policy states the eligibility criteria and process for the administration of financial support for students undertaking Further and Higher Education study at Moulton College in 2022 - 2023.
2. This policy will include proposed changes that will be implemented during its approved period that will impact on the recruitment process for 2023 – 2024.
3. It is a requirement of the Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency and the Office for Students (OfS) to release a published statement setting out how Institutions will use their bursary fund allocation to support learners with the associated cost of attending and studying at a further education institution.
4. Funding guidance rules require a structured system that demonstrates a consistent approach to the decision making process and a justification for discretion outside of the policy where required. This policy is a commitment to adhere to the funding agency rules.

Changes for 2022-23

5. All institutions have been reminded that Landbased residential bursary's should be prioritised.
6. Minimum attendance levels being enforced, with a review on reporting.
7. Work to begin on a fully "online" application process to support applicants with an easy to access portal and evidence submission. Award status and updates will be posted through this system, including the ability to appeal decisions congruent with this policy (section 11 & 18).
8. Recognition and allowance for families with exception conditions.

Administration of Bursary Funding Applicants

9. Applications for financial support are administered by the Bursary Administrator and those meeting the criteria are approved by the Student Services Coordinator.
10. All assessed applications will be ratified the chair of the "Bursary and Discretionary Bursary Panel".
11. Where reviews are required to hear appeals then a meeting of the "Bursary and Discretionary Bursary Panel", will be held. The Panel will be chaired by the

Director of Student Services, and may contain the Director of Finance, Student Services Coordinator, Transport Coordinator and the Student Welfare Manager (Director of Student and Learning Support).

12. Panel meetings will be held as required or at intervals during the application period throughout the year to review:
 - Exceptional applicants with circumstances where additional financial support is required. A fair and consistent award will be agreed by the Panel, ensuring any discretion is justified and evidenced for audit purposes.
 - Financial control of allocated funding. To ensure the agreed support package is making the desired impact on student recruitment, retention and attendance as well as removing/reducing financial barriers for learning to take place.
 - Current processes – to inform future improvements in supporting learners financially.
13. The process is under review for the application period 2022 - 23 to take the process fully online to further streamline the process for the benefit of the students..
14. Bursary award decisions should be made to applicants in writing no later than 1 calendar month after their application for support has been submitted with complete evidence attached. Where the service is able to, the letter will be sent before this time.
15. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing of the decision, no later than 1 calendar month from the date the application form was submitted with complete evidence.
16. Appeals should be writing from the applicant, their next of kin, parent or carer if under 18. Appeals should be made to the Director of Student Services (DSS). In the first instance the appeal will be reviewed by the DSS. The DSS will consider if discretion can be applied, and if so this will be recorded on the applicants account and the applicant informed. If the DSS is not able to apply discretion, or the request falls outside the parameters of a “normal” award, the appeal will be escalated to the Panel, identified in 6. The appeal will need to address the reason for initial rejection and also provide explanation of any extenuating circumstance the applicant wishes the panel to consider.
17. The window of applications to be submitted for assessment will close at the end of the first term or whenever the available funds are depleted, whichever is sooner (with the exception of free meals and the guaranteed bursary as both are entitlements). Late applications, where funds remain OR in the case of a hardship claim will continue to be received and processed on demand.

Core Financial Support Package

18. 16 to 19 Bursary

Award Category	Full Income is <£25,000	Partial Income is =£25,000 - £30,000	In receipt of certain Benefits
Residential	£5,185 (inc catering)	£3,300	
Residential Duty Rooms	Max £193	Max £130	
Meals			FREE*
College Transport	£660	£440 (2ND & 3RD term)	
PPE	100%	50%	
Guaranteed Bursary	Up to £1,200 per year for defined vulnerable learners (see section 4.4 for eligible definitions of Vulnerability).		
Childcare (ages 16-19)	Apply to Care 2 Learn (See www.gov.uk/care-to-learn for eligibility and contacts)		
To further support those at risk of extreme deprivation, for families consisting of three or more children, the boundaries will move £1,000 for every additional child, over three. E.g. for a family of four children the 16-18 Full threshold would be £26,000, the partial would become £26,000 to £31,000.			

*To be eligible for free meals you must be in receipt of a listed benefit. See section 4.5

19. Adult Discretionary Learner Support and Advanced Learner Loan

Award Category	Full - Income is <£25,000	Partial - Income is =£25,000 – £30,000
Residential	£4,430	£2,820
Transport	Actual cost up to max. £600	Actual cost up to max. £400
Course Equipment	Actual cost up to max. £250	Actual cost up to max. £125
Fees (Exams, Tuition, Registration)~	£1000	£500
Childcare (ages 20+)	Actual cost up to a max. £160 p/wk	Actual cost up to a max. £160 p/wk
To further support those at risk of extreme deprivation, for families consisting of three or more children, the boundaries will move £1,000 for every additional child, over three. E.g. for a family of four children the 16-18 Full threshold would be £26,000, the partial would become £26,000 to £31,000.		

^ For eligibility of fee remission see the Fee Remission guide – Appendix 1
~ Not eligible for support if eligible for a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan

20. Transport Support (Ages 16-18)

- Northamptonshire County Council offers a subsidy for learners under the age of 18, meeting their low income test and travelling to Moulton College as their nearest institution.
- If a learner is not on a Moulton College bus route they may receive a discretionary payment towards the cost of travel in the second and third term, subject to bursary funds remaining.
- Local Authority rules state 3 miles as the maximum acceptable walking distance. As Moulton College and its satellite sites are located in rural locations, the 3 mile rule may be waived where learners who live less than 3 miles would experience a dangerous journey e.g. having to walk down a village road with little or no paved walking areas.
- Where a student can provide evidence of a mobility issue, the 3 mile rule will also be waived.

21. Transport Support (Ages 19 and over)

- We will offer financial support towards the lowest cost, most practical form of transport for an adult learner up to a capped maximum amount in-line with the means-tested threshold that is evidenced at the assessment stage.
- Where a student lives less than 3 miles from the College site they are due to attend, a practicality assessment will take place to determine the need for financial support, in order to make the most of our limited allocated funds.
- Local Authority rules state 3 miles as the maximum acceptable walking distance. As Moulton College and its satellite sites are located in rural locations, the 3 mile rule may be waived where learners who live less than 3 miles would experience a dangerous journey e.g. having to walk down a village road with little or no paved walking areas.
- Where a student can provide evidence of a mobility issue, the 3 mile rule will also be waived.

22. Residential Support (All ages)

- Priority will be given to students residing more than 20 miles from the College, where travel on a daily basis by public or Moulton College transport is not available or to students on courses that require regular attendance at early morning and weekend commercial experience.
- Priority will also be given to students enrolling onto Land based provision.
- Duty Room costs will be supported under condition that the student has identified this need in their initial application, the room is required as an essential part of the course.

23. Guaranteed Bursary Defined Vulnerable Groups (Ages 16-18)

- A learner who was 16-18 years of age on 31st August 2022 and is living independently whilst in receipt of Income Support in their name. This should be evidenced with a recent Income Support award letter or their tenancy agreement.
- A learner who was aged 16-18 years of age on 31st August 2022 and is in receipt of Both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living

Allowance. Both benefits must be in the name of the learner and evidence by producing original benefit award letters.

- A learner who was 16-18 years of age on 31st August 2022 and is looked after by the local authority. This can be evidenced by providing a letter from the local authority confirming your status as 'looked after child' under section 20 or 31 of the children act 1989.
- A learner who was 16-18 years of age on 31st August 2022 and is a care leaver, having previously been looked after by the local authority for a consecutive 13 weeks, beginning after the age of 14 and ending after the age of 16. This can be evidenced by providing a letter from the local authority confirming your status as a 'care leaver'.

24. Free Meals eligibility

- Students must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2022 to be eligible for a free meal. Students who turn 19 during their programme of study will remain eligible for a free meal until the end of that academic year in which they turn 19 or to the end of their programme of study, whichever is sooner.
- Students in receipt of one of the following benefits (or their parent/guardian in receipt) will be eligible for a free meal:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The guarantee element of State 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
 - Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit (during the initial roll out of the benefit)
- Students aged between 19 and 25 who are subject to a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) and ESF students aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2022 are also entitled to a free meal while attending their provision if they meet the benefits eligibility criteria.
- Credits for the meals will be loaded onto the students ID card to provide a discreet system. The ID needs to be produced when ordering food at Moulton College restaurants/cafes.

Eligibility Conditions (16-19 Bursary)

25. Student must be aged 16-18 years of age on 31st August 2022. If the learner turns 19 whilst on the course they started on 31st August, they will receive support from the 16 to 19 bursary fund until the end of the academic year.
26. Eligible vulnerable learners in receipt of the guaranteed bursary will be awarded a pro rata amount of the total £1,200 if they are enrolled on a part-time course or

become eligible on the above stated defined vulnerable groups, mid-way through the academic year. Awards will be calculated as follows:

Becoming eligible mid-year:

Weekly guaranteed bursary amount x Remaining weeks in the academic year where the learner is eligible to be paid guaranteed bursary

Enrolled on a part-time course:

Weekly guaranteed bursary amount x No. weeks enrolled on part-time course

Eligibility Conditions (Adult Discretionary Learner Support)

27. Childcare funding can only be awarded for Ofsted registered childcare. This can be with a child minder, private nursery or pre/after school club.
28. Learners who are fully funded through a tuition fee remission must not be charged a mandatory fee for something that is required to achieve their course. This includes administration, registration, assessment, materials or examination costs. This can also include charges for identification passes, uniforms, tools and materials where the learner cannot achieve their learning aim without them. The exception to this rule is approved Advanced Learning Loans students.

HE Awards

29. Student Loans, The **Students Loan Company** (SLC) administers the following extra support for all eligible applicants domiciled in England, Wales or Northern Ireland
 - Maintenance Loan
 - Part Time Course Grant
 - Tuition Fee Loan
 - Tuition Fee Grant (Full-Time)
 - Fee Grant (Part-Time)

Further information on all the above can be found in our Learner Support Funds Leaflet – Higher Education or on the SLC website – www.slc.co.uk

30. Disabled HE Students and Extra Support funds are administered by the **Students Loan Company** (SLC) for all eligible applicants domiciled in England, Wales or Northern Ireland over the following:
 - Disabled Students' Allowances
 - Childcare Grant
 - Parents' Learning Allowance
 - Adult Dependants' Grant

Further information on all the above can be found in our Learner Support Funds Leaflet – Higher Education or on the SLC website – www.slc.co.uk

31. Moulton College HE Bursaries. Applications are taken at or after enrolment, paid over three terms and linked to minimum attendance criteria. Available awards are listed in the HE section of the website.

Conditions of Payment

32. Awards will be made as 'payment in kind' where possible. This means students will not be paid directly where Moulton College has the ability to provide support in-house. This can be achieved on most PPE items (arranged with suppliers), residential fees, tuition fees, meal tokens, etc. This removes the issue of support not being received in a timely manner and ensures little to no financial management issues for students/parents/guardians.
33. Awards are subject to the learner's continued attendance, progression and good behaviour on their chosen course. Where unsatisfactory, the panel reserves the right to reduce or stop future award payments until improvement is shown.
34. Awards to individuals are allocated on a first come, first served basis. Awards will be allocated until the end of the first term or until funding allocations are exhausted (whichever is sooner).

Management Information and Auditing Requirements

35. Funding guidance permits institutions to retain 5% of allocated funds for administration costs (with the exception of the Advanced Learner Loan, being 5% admin retained from total funds awarded).
36. Data on awarded students to be included in ILR returns and documents related to student bursary awards are required to be retained by Moulton College for auditing purposes. Paperwork will be archived securely at the end of the academic year and shredded upon the 6 year required document retention deadline.
37. Management information returns are required at certain points in the academic year. ESFA requires a mid-year return in January/February and an end of year return in September/October. These will be completed through collaboration by the Director of Student Services and the Director of Finance and MIS Manager.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Please complete both sides of this Equality Impact Assessment and ensure that the latest copy of this is recorded as part of the appendices of the specific policy.

Policy Reference and Name	SS-10 Student Bursary Discretionary and Advanced loans bursary funds policy
Assessment date	Sunday 18 th September 2022
Completed by	DSS
What are the aims of the policy?	To provide a consistent, fair and equitable framework for the delivery of available funds
Who does the policy affect?	All students
Who is involved in implementing the policy?	DSS/SSC/Bursary Administrator/ fiancé dept
What information is currently available about the impact of this policy and its associated procedures?	Assessment of achievement against non-recipients is provided in the E&D reports.
Do you need more information to help you make an assessment about the impact of this policy and its associated procedures?	No
Do you have any examples that show how this policy will have a positive impact on any of the equality characteristics listed in the table below?	See E&D reports
Which other policies does this policy link with?	None
What consultation has taken place in the development of this policy?	Staff as above

Use the table below to assess the impact of this policy on each of the listed characteristics. Your decision must be evidence based. Sources of evidence might include success rates, achievement gaps, application and enrolment data, student voice, consultation outcomes, recruitment and employment data, customer feedback or complaints, meeting minutes.

Characteristic <small>(These characteristics are protected under the Equality Act 2010)</small>	Negative impact? Y / N	Evidence to support your impact assessment decision	Requires further action? Y/N
Age	N	All applicants are treated the same and all awards are consistent to policy	N
Disability	N	All applicants are treated the same and all awards are consistent to policy	N
Race	N	All applicants are treated the same and all awards are consistent to policy	N
Gender, inc. re-assignment	N	All applicants are treated the same and all awards are consistent to policy	N
Sexual orientation	N	All applicants are treated the same and all awards are consistent to policy	N
Religion / belief	N	All applicants are treated the same and all awards are consistent to policy	N
Pregnancy / maternity	N	All applicants are treated the same and all awards are consistent to policy	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N	All applicants are treated the same and all awards are consistent to policy	N
Socio-economic	N	All applicants are treated the same and all awards are consistent to policy which is sympathetic to this criteria.	N

Overall EIA judgement

Select	
✓	No change required - The assessment is that the policy is/will be robust. There is no evidence of potentially unlawful discrimination and all reasonable opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations have been taken, subject to continuing monitoring and review
	Adjust the policy or practice - This involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations. This may involve removing or changing the aspect of the policy that creates any negative or unwanted impact. It may also involve introducing additional measures to reduce or mitigate any potential negative impact
	Continue the policy - This means adopting/continuing with the policy despite the potential for adverse impact. Set out the rationale for this decision, including how the decision is compatible with our legal obligation. Where there is discrimination, but it is considered not to be unlawful – the objective justification must be recorded
	Stop the policy - If there would otherwise be unlawful discrimination or adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be prevented/mitigated