

Activate Community and Education Services	Policy number:	POL- 56
	Authorisation level: Final	Issue Number: 3.1
	Implementation Date: 14/9/2015	Revision Date: 26/11/19
Bursary Fund and Free Meals Policy		

1. Introduction

Activate aims to provide support for students who are likely to be disadvantaged by financial constraints and by the impact of study on their finances. All full-time and part-time students on EFA funded courses are eligible to apply for support.

The Bursary fund is a discretionary fund and is cash limited. There will be a formal assessment of need.

Free meals can be accessed by students on EFA funded programmes.

Objectives

- Ensure the successful identification and targeting of the most financially vulnerable students
- To positively support attendance and retention working in line with tutors to identify “At Risk” students
- Ensure an open and fair process in relation to distribution of funds.

2. Entitlement

Free Meals: Activate will invite application from students 19-24 years enrolled on EFA programmes. There is a specification that student must meet to be granted free meals.

Discretionary Bursary: Activate will invite applications from students aged 19-24 for discretionary bursaries to help them meet specific costs related to college. Priority will be given to students entitled to free meals, although applications are welcomed from students whose individual contribution to household taxable income does not exceed £26,000 including taxable benefits in the last financial year. If a student does not have their own income, then parental contribution to the household taxable income will be used as long as this does not exceed £26,000 including taxable benefits in the last financial year..This must be established through current wage slips/P60, benefit award notice letters or bank statements. Applicants will be required to verify purchases. The threshold of £26,000 may be increased at the SMT’s(Senior Management Team) discretion if insufficient applications are made.

Any new students may apply but will not receive the discretionary bursary until 42 days after their start date at college.

3. Withdrawal/Withholding of Bursaries

Activate will, at its discretion; withhold funding from successful applicants who do not attend college regularly without a valid reason. This is based on an attendance rate of 90%. This includes authorised absences.

Students who leave college during the academic year will no longer be entitled to a bursary.

4. Payment

Bursaries may be paid ‘in kind’ e.g. a transport pass or IT equipment. Such items provided to named individuals should be returned to college at the end of the course as they may be suitable for a new student.

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5. In-Year Applications

New students arriving mid academic year may apply for the discretionary bursary on a first come, first served basis as long as the relevant bursary criteria is met and that bursary funds are still available.

6. How to Apply

Application forms and lists of evidence required for both Free Meals and Bursary are available from Student Services.

7. Organisation and Appeals

The Bursary funding for discretionary awards is given to the college every year by the Education Funding Agency(EFA). Once these monies have been allocated during the year the college will not be able to make further grants until the new academic year.

If you wish to appeal a decision you must inform the CEO within five working days. You will then be invited to a meeting, which you must take all reasonable steps to attend. Following the appeal meeting you will be informed of the final decision, normally within ten working days, which will be confirmed in writing. The decision is final.

8. Data

The college is required to track data on each student who submits an application. This information will be audited by the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

For audit purposes students applying for the discretionary bursary are required to identify why they require the bursary e.g. travel, resources etc. The application forms will be kept in a lockable cabinet/cupboard to keep data safe. The data will be securely disposed of after 7 years.

9. Other Information

Current guidance from the Funding Agency regarding Management Information required will be as follows:

- How many vulnerable students applied for the Discretionary Bursary
- How many were awarded the Discretionary Bursary and what was the allocation
- How much did these students actually receive
- How much was spent on Discretionary Bursaries in total
- The reasons each bursary was allocated:
 - Books/equipment
 - Additional costs
 - Transport
 - Meals
 - Specialised clothing (where it directly relates to a course)
 - Materials
 - Course related trips and educational visits
 - Open day costs
 - Sports or other activities (where they directly relate to a course)
 - Other miscellaneous – specifying what

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- It is expected that if a student changes providers that the information regarding their Bursary Award is communicated.
- It is at the discretion of each institution to design arrangements that best suits the needs and individual circumstances, including the frequency of payments.
- It is also an expectation that the payment is conditional on the student meeting agreed standards set by the provider.
- There is no cut-off date stipulated by the Education Funding Agency in terms of applications but schools/colleges are advised that a date is agreed by which applications are made.
- Applications last the duration of the academic year and students will need to resubmit an application each year to be awarded a Bursary.
- Schools/colleges can also award asylum seekers under the Discretionary Bursary allocation.
- All Bursary payments will be used to support the student's education.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the CEO and the SMT.