



SFC Guidance

National policy for further education bursaries: 2018-19

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Summary: An explanation of the conditions for use of college bursary funds.

FAO: Principals and Finance Directors of Scotland's colleges

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National policy for further education bursaries: 2018-19

Introduction and updates for academic year 2018-19

1. This national policy supports the strategic priorities and outcomes of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Scottish Government.
2. The policy stipulates the conditions of use of bursary funds allocated to colleges by SFC and sets out the rates for calculation for Academic Year (AY) 2018-19.
3. The bursary fund is cash-limited. Students who are eligible for support from this fund are not automatically entitled to this support.

Changes to 2018-19 policy

4. The updates to the paragraphs and relevant sections of the guidance are set out in the Annexes to this announcement. The main changes are:
 - ***Increase in maintenance rates***
The Scottish Government has confirmed its expectation that, as part of its budget settlement for AY 2018-19, there would be extra funds available for student support. This has resulted in an increase in the maintenance awards for students in AY 2018-19.
 - ***Updated section on attendance***
The presentation of this section of the guidance has been refreshed to clarify that colleges are **not** expected to operate a "100% attendance" requirement and to emphasise the flexibilities that exist within SFC's attendance conditions. Specifically, the college should take into account students' wider circumstances and, as long as students are engaging in their learning, the college can allocate funding.
 - ***Students under 18 in college approved accommodation***
Confirmation that students who are under 18 and living in college accommodation but not eligible for an EMA because their parental income is higher than EMA income threshold can be assessed for the personal allowance from bursary funds
 - ***New Carers Allowances***
Confirmation that the two new Carers Allowances being introduced by the Scottish Government – the Carer's Allowance Supplement and the Young Carer's Grant - should not be included in income assessments when means testing for student support.

- ***Universal Credit***

Additional guidance on assessing the income of parents and partners who are on Universal Credit and on allocating funding to students who move to Universal Credit during the academic year.

- ***Care experienced students – age limit and informal care arrangements***

Definition of care experienced students as being up to 26 years old. This aligns with the legislative definition and the SAAS policy. Care experienced students aged 26 and above should be means tested for bursary in the usual way. We have also clarified that students in informal care arrangements do not automatically qualify for funding as care experienced students. However, the college may take the decision that students in informal care arrangements are self-supporting and allocate a higher rate of funding on this basis.

- ***Change to Residency Criteria***

The Residency Criteria are changing to extend eligibility for funding to students who have been granted leave to remain in the UK as Stateless Persons and to Afghan Locally Employed Staff. We expect to receive updated residency guidance in the coming months.

Further information

5. Please contact Jane Scott, Funding Policy Officer for further information, tel: 0131 313 6660, email: jscott@sfc.ac.uk.



Martin Smith

Chief Funding & Information Officer

Annex: Summary of updates to FE Bursary Guidance for AY 2018-19

Fund Management & Audit Information Section		
Subject	Paragraph number(s)	Change to policy
Attendance	45-52	Emphasis on the flexibilities that exist within SFC's attendance conditions.
Data protection	32 and 58-59	All personal data must be processed in accordance with applicable data protection legislation. Colleges should be aware that the EU General Data Protection Regulation will come into force during 2018.
Data retention	69-72	Guidance updated to reflect increased retention periods for documentation relating to ESF students.

Award Assessment Section		
Subject	Paragraph number(s)	Change to policy
Universal Credit	54-58 and Tables 1 & 2	Guidance on assessing the income of parents and partners who are on Universal Credit. Guidance on allocating funding to students who move to Universal Credit during the academic year.
Students under 18 in college approved accommodation	39	Confirmation that if a student is under 18 and living in college accommodation but not eligible for an EMA because their parental income is higher than EMA income threshold, they can be assessed for the personal allowance of £30.14 per week from bursary funds.
Carers Allowances	96 and Tables 1 & 2	Confirmation that the two new Carers Allowances to be introduced in Scotland in 2018 (Carer's Allowance Supplement and the Young Carer's Grant) should not be included in income assessments when means testing for student support.
Student support rates	Annex and relevant text	Inflationary increase applied to student support rates for the academic year.

Advisors' Notes Section		
Subject	Paragraph number(s)	Change to policy
Care experienced/Care leaver definition	7-11	Definition of Care Experienced students is up to 26 years old, to align with the legislative definition and the SAAS policy. Care Experienced students aged 26 and over should be means tested for bursary in the usual way. Clarification that students in informal care arrangements do not automatically qualify for funding as care experienced. However, the college may take the decision that students in informal care arrangements are self-supporting.
Carers	13	Inclusion of a link to additional information about resources for students who are carers.
Self-supporting students	51	Inclusion of a link to additional information about self-supporting students.
Veterans	58	Definition of a veteran of the armed forces for funding purposes.