



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoinachaidh na h-Alba

National policy for further education bursaries AY 2021-22

SFC Guidance

Issue Date: 21 June 2021

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Reference: SFC/GD/08/2021

Summary: Explanation of the conditions for use of SFC college bursary funds in Academic Year 2021-22.

FAO: Principals and Finance Directors of Scotland's colleges.

Further information: **Contact:** Student Support team
Department: Funding Policy
Email: studentsupport@sfc.ac.uk

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National policy for further education bursaries: AY 2021-22

Introduction

1. This policy document stipulates the conditions of use of bursary funds allocated to colleges by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and sets out the rates for calculation for Academic Year (AY) 2021-22. This policy continues to support the strategic priorities and outcomes of SFC and the Scottish Government.
2. Student support funds are cash-limited. Students who are eligible for support from this funding are not automatically entitled to this support.

Updates for AY 2021-22

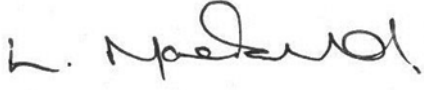
3. The updates to the paragraphs and relevant sections of the guidance are set out in the annex to this announcement. The main changes are:
 - ***Increase in bursary maintenance rate***
The annual bursary maintenance rate has been increased to a maximum of £4,667.65. Split over 43 weeks, this provides a new maximum weekly award of £108.55.
 - ***Introduction of Care-Experienced evidence form***
As part of the ongoing work to align with Student Award Agency Scotland (SAAS) policies and procedures where possible, colleges can offer students the choice of whether to use this form to evidence their care experience. Colleges are also reminded that they can use discretion when allocating awards to Care-Experienced students who cannot access documentation.

COVID-19

4. SFC is continuing to work through unprecedented times as we recover from the pandemic. In AY 2021-22 we will continue to work with the sector to support students and staff at this time.
5. We are publishing our National Policy for Further Education Bursaries to provide advice for college Student Support practitioners. SFC is aware of, and fully appreciates, the particular efforts which those who work on Student Support have encountered during this pandemic. SFC also recognises the impact the pandemic continues to have on students' finances.
6. These documents aim to provide a standard foundation upon which Student Support funding award assessments and decisions can be made by college staff. Where there is a need to provide additional or exceptional guidance in relation to COVID-19 aspects, we will continue to circulate this information directly to our established Student Support sector contacts, and publish it on the [COVID-19 page](#) of SFC's website.

Further information

7. Please contact the Student Support team, email: studentsupport@sfc.ac.uk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. MacDonald'.

Lorna MacDonald
Director of Finance

Annex: Summary of updates to FE Bursary Guidance for AY 2021-22

Fund Management & Audit Information document		
<i>Subject</i>	<i>Paragraph number(s)</i>	<i>Change to policy</i>
Fund Management	18	The overall bursary rate for AY 2021-22 is now a maximum annual award of £4,667.65 being split over 43 weeks, giving a new maximum weekly award of £108.55.
Attendance and Student Engagement	48	Guidance update to remind colleges to be flexible on attendance/engagement when operating online teaching. If students are not able to participate/engage due to lack of ICT equipment/connectivity issues bursary payments should not be stopped.

Award Assessment document		
<i>Subject</i>	<i>Paragraph number(s)</i>	<i>Change to policy</i>
Eligibility of student	4	Guidance has been updated to reflect the changes to the definition of Ordinary Residency in the Guidance for AY 2020-21. The fully updated version for AY 2021-22 including the changes to EU Fees policy will be published later in the summer.
Calculation of the previous student support funding received	7 (i)	Where students are applying for funding to support completion of their AY 2020-21 studies which were disrupted due to COVID-19, the calculation should disregard any previous funding received for the duration of their disruption.
Calculation of the previous student support funding received	7(iii)	SFC will work with SAAS on the alignment of policies with regards to the duration of student support in the coming year. SFC's guidance has always recognised that students with disabilities may take longer to

		complete a course for reasons directly related to their disability. In the meantime, colleges should note the clarification that supported learners and students whose educational development does not match a standard progression model may also be supported over an extended timeframe under this exception for students with disabilities.
Financial assessment outline	101 -103	Guidance update to include the new three benefits that are being delivered this year. These new benefits should be excluded from the income assessment.
Assessing the student's available income	110	Guidance update to include all pension income (state/private/employer's) as income used in the assessment.
FE Student Support Rates AY 2021-22	Annex A	Figures updated to reflect increase in bursary maintenance rate for AY 2021-22.
Study Costs - Average Sector Spend	Annex B	Figures updated to include AY 2019-20 sector-level spend. However, this year, detail on average subject spend is excluded.

Advisors' Notes document		
<i>Subject</i>	<i>Paragraph number(s)</i>	<i>Change to policy</i>
Alternative funds	3	Removal of pension credit from the alternative funds section.
Legislation and categories of care which are eligible for Care-Experience assessment	10 -11	Addition of a standardised form which colleges may use as an alternative form of evidence for care status. This has been introduced following consultation with the sector on evidence requirements.
Unearned income	62	Inclusion of state pension and pension credit as unearned income.

Informal Care Experience	18	Indication that SFC is currently working with SAAS and key external stakeholders on the definitions of kinship care and informal care. Our aim is to align policies for Care Experienced students. This work is ongoing and we will inform colleges of relevant developments in due course.
Specific Categories for Care-Experienced Bursary Eligibility	Annex B paragraph 3	Updates to reflect the introduction of the Care-Experienced standardised evidence form. Colleges are also reminded of the pre-existing advice in the <i>Fund Management and Audit</i> section of the Bursary guidance, which acknowledges that students who are Care-Experienced may have difficulty in accessing documentation. If a student who is Care-Experienced cannot access the required documentation, the college may approve an award to the student at its own discretion.
Evidencing care status	Annex B paragraph 4	Further reminder of the pre-existing advice in the <i>Fund Management and Audit</i> section of the Bursary guidance which gives colleges the flexibility to approve awards for students who are Care-Experienced by not able to access evidence of their care status due to exceptional circumstances.
Care-Experienced Evidence Form	Annex C	Standardised form for evidencing care status.