

2017/2018 ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET LEARNER SUPPORT POLICY & GUIDANCE

Policy Statement

The Adult Education Budget (AEB) Learner Support is available to support learners with a specific financial hardship that prevents them from participating in learning. The fund will be distributed in a consistent and equitable way and in accordance with guidance issued by the Skills Funding Agency.

Chelmsford College has determined that funds will be allocated to cover the essential costs, it deems necessary, for learners to complete their Study Programme. Support is very limited and cannot cover all costs associated with all Study Programmes. Funds will generally be paid to a third party, not directly to the learner.

All on-going bursary payments will be subject to 90% attendance across your study programme and meeting college expectations of coursework and behaviour or payments may be withheld. Students are responsible for monitoring their attendance and addressing any queries.

It is always advisable to consider the availability of other strands of financial support and enquire, for example, about what financial assistance is available through the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) as the AEB must not be used where other sources of funding are available. Please speak with a DWP Advisor as soon as possible as early applications are essential to allow processing time before your enrolment.

Each application is individually assessed and **all assistance is subject to the availability of funds**. Learners who are eligible for support are not automatically entitled to it. If demand exceeds the available funds, reduced awards may be given and when the fund is fully committed, no further awards will be made.

Applications are assessed against household income. Means testing will be rigorous but not excessive and supporting evidence of personal circumstances and/or relevant benefit evidence will be required. Other sources of financial support will be taken into consideration when processing applications.

Eligibility

To be eligible for support you must be classified as being

- a 'home' student for fee assessment purposes
- enrolled on a funded study programme
- 19+ years of age on 1 September 2017
- **and** able to demonstrate a genuine financial hardship which is causing a barrier to learning (taxable household income must not exceed £21,000).

Priority groups

Priority will be given to

- Learners enrolling on to the 2nd year
- Existing learners progressing to the next level
- Young People in care or care leavers
- Young Adult Carers

The following groups are **not** eligible for AEB funds

- Waged apprentices
- Learners on HE courses
- Learners in prison or released on temporary license
- Learners in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan (please refer to the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Policy)

Assessments will be made within the following categories.

Category 1

Financial assistance for:

- a. **Young people in care**
- b. **Care leavers**

Appropriate evidence would be a letter from your local authority (usually a social worker) to confirm your current status.

Level of support

Learners in category 1 may be eligible for the following financial assistance:

Bursary: A vulnerable learner bursary **up to £1200** per academic year which will be paid weekly in arrears directly to your bank account. Learners will be required to have a bank account to receive bursary awards.

Course costs: Financial assistance for help towards costs such as uniforms, books, equipment and materials. Only costs deemed necessary to complete your Study Programme will be paid. Visits and enrichment activities that are not linked to learning and assessment will not be supported.

Food Allowance: An allowance of up to £3.50 per timetabled day can be made towards food costs whilst in college. Regular payments will be made directly onto college cards to be spent in the college refectories. Where there is no access to the college refectories luncheon vouchers can be provided.

Travel: The AEB may be able to help towards your travel costs to and from college. Full cost can be paid for the autumn term only. Further support will be subject to the availability of funds. Please refer to the College Travel Scheme for cost information.

Tuition fees: Maximum 30% of total fees

With evidence of a low income 30% towards the fees may be applied for.

Category 2

All learners, who meet the eligibility criteria, may apply for financial assistance. Evidence of income or benefit will be required.

Level of support

Learners in category 2 may be eligible for the following financial assistance:

Course costs: Financial assistance for help towards costs such as uniforms, books, equipment and materials. Only costs deemed necessary to complete your Study Programme will be paid. Visits and enrichment activities that are not linked to learning and assessment will not be supported.

Food Allowance: An allowance of up to £3.50 per timetabled day can be made towards food costs whilst in college. Regular payments will be made directly onto college cards to be spent in the college refectories. Where there is no access to the college refectories luncheon vouchers can be provided.

Travel: The AEB may be able to help towards your travel costs to and from college. Full cost can be paid for the autumn term only. Further support will be subject to the availability of funds. Please refer to the College Travel Scheme for cost information.

Tuition fees: Maximum 30% of total fees

With evidence of a low income 30% towards the fees may be applied for.

Financial Hardship

Applications can be made where household income exceeds the guidelines and evidence of financial hardship can be demonstrated eg. redundancy, bereavement, debt management. Supporting evidence will be necessary to fully assess your application and determine level of support available.

How to Apply

Learners on full-time Study Programmes

Complete a Financial Support application form, ensuring that you **enclose a copy of your supporting evidence**. All applications are assessed on receipt of a correctly completed application form, within the priority groups. As funds are limited an early application is advisable.

Applications must be received by **14 July 2017**. Applications received after this date will not receive priority assessment. Later applications will be accepted and assessed in order of receipt.

Learners on part time Study Programmes

Complete the financial support section of the part time programme application form. During your enrolment you will be asked to complete a Financial Support application form and provide **a copy of your supporting evidence**. All applications are assessed on receipt of a correctly completed application form within the priority groups. As funds are limited an early application is advisable.

Childcare

For Learners aged 20+, on funded full or part time programmes. Financial assistance will be towards College term time care costs only (up to 36 weeks). It is the learner's responsibility to find a term time only carer or be responsible for covering any additional costs. Adjustments can be made where a learning provision falls outside college term time.

Conditions:

- An application form must be completed in advance.
- Childcare providers must be registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register and/or the compulsory part of the Ofsted General Childcare Register. Where a childcare provider is related to the child, for example a grandmother or aunt, that childcare provider must also prove they are providing registered childcare services for children they are not related to.
- The childcare provider must complete the Childcare Provider section of the application form.
- Childcare will be for timetabled days only and paid at **80%** of the total term time cost minus any available Government funding with a ceiling of £7,500 per learner.
- Learners supported with childcare costs are expected to pay for all ancillary charges eg. meals, nappies, trips etc.
- Childcare costs will not be paid if the learner is absent from college without good reason and has not followed reporting absence procedures – in such cases the learner will be expected to pay 100% of the cost of childcare for the duration of the absence.
- Learners must achieve a satisfactory attendance of 90% and above and meet college expectations of coursework and behaviour or payments will be withheld.
- It is expected that holidays will not be taken during term time but should this occur, childcare costs for the period of absence will not be paid.
- A cheque made payable to the carer must be collected and signed for by the learner.
- Up to date benefit evidence must be provided termly for the assistance to continue to the end of the academic year.

How to Apply for Childcare

Complete the child care section on the financial support application form. Following assessment and if your application is successful you will be contacted by the Financial Support Co-ordinator to complete the necessary documentation. **Please do not assume childcare will be paid until you receive a confirmation letter.**

Application Process

In order for your application to be processed you must fully complete the application form and **provide a copy of your relevant evidence**.

Confirmation of the outcome of your application will be sent in writing within 2 weeks of the date received. If you have been allocated funds your confirmation letter must be brought with you at enrolment to finalise your application.

If you do not attend for enrolment reserved funds may be reallocated.

If all funds have been allocated your details will be recorded on a waiting list. You will receive written confirmation of this and contacted as soon as funds become available.

Chelmsford College cannot take responsibility for any correspondence lost or mislaid in the post.

Additional Information

AEB Conditions

In order to receive AEB awards learners are expected to achieve a satisfactory attendance of 90% and above across their study programme and meet college expectations of coursework and behaviour. If attendance does not meet college requirements payments may be withheld, subject to a progress review with learner's Academic Tutor. Personal circumstances will be taken into consideration when determining if payments are to be re-instated.

Part-time/Short Programmes

Where learners are studying on part-time or short study programmes financial assistance will be pro-rated and adjusted accordingly.

Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances discretionary payments can be considered for costs which have been identified as a barrier to participating in learning. Applications for discretionary payments will be referred to The Student Support Team Leader for assessment. Where there are exceptional circumstances, reasonable adjustments to the policy can be made.

Additional Study Hours

Travel and food costs can be considered for additional studies required to complete your Study Programme.

Changes of Circumstances

Learners will be required to disclose any change of circumstances during the year which may affect their eligibility. If a learner leaves before the completion of their Study Programme they may be asked to repay their award or return any equipment.

Appeals

If you don't agree with a decision and wish to appeal, please put it in writing to The Director of Learner Development and Inclusion within 7 days of receiving your letter. Appeals will be resolved within 21 working days.

Please Note:

The information provided is correct at time of publication but may be subject to change in line with Government guidelines.

This document can also be found on the Chelmsford College Website www.chelmsford.ac.uk and may be converted to other formats if appropriate (Braille, Large Print, Other Languages etc.).

This guidance applies to the academic year **2017/2018** and is reviewed annually.