



HAVANT &  
SOUTH DOWNS  
COLLEGE

# LEARNER SUPPORT FUND POLICY

## 2019-2020

<b>Responsible Senior Manager:</b>	Vice Principal – Finance & Facilities
<b>Approved by:</b>	F&E Committee *
<b>Related Policies:</b>	
<b>Effective from:</b>	August 2019
<b>Review Date:</b>	March 2019
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	March 2020



\* Under delegated powers.

# **HAVANT & SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE LEARNER SUPPORT FUND POLICY 2019-20**

## **1. Aim**

To support potential students who face genuine financial barriers to participation in learning with essential course-related costs such as transport, food or equipment.

All applications are considered individually. The funds will be granted where a genuine need for assistance has been demonstrated and the student meets residency eligibility following guidelines issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

At Havant & South Downs College (which comprises of campuses at Havant, South Downs and Alton) the Learner Support Fund is split into

- General and Discretionary Financial Assistance
- 19+ Advanced Learning Loans Bursary (ALLB)
- 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary Fund (VB)

This policy lists the Criteria/Eligibility and 'How to Apply' individually for the above.

This policy lists the Financial Assistance Offered, How Payments Are Made and the Conditions and Appeals Procedure collectively for all the above.

## **2. Financial Assistance**

Financial Assistance is designed to provide support to all full and part time students aged 16+ who face genuine financial barriers to participation.

### **Criteria/Eligibility for Financial Assistance**

- Must be currently attending a course at HSDC which is funded by the ESFA (this excludes SC/HC coded courses, HNC/HND, some Level 4 and Level 5 courses, and Treloar-funded courses).
- Aged 16 or over on 31 August 2019 and living with their Parent/Carer who is in receipt of at least one of the benefits listed below: -
  - Job Seekers Allowance (where there is an Income-Based payment, not solely a National Insurance Credit)
  - Income Support
  - Working Tax Credit (not solely Child Tax Credit)
  - Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
  - Housing benefit
  - Council Tax Support (other than the single person allowance)
  - Employment & Support Allowance (Income-related)
  - Universal Credit (not solely Child Tax element)
- Aged 19 or over on 31 August 2019 and in receipt of at least one of the benefits listed above or an unwaged dependent of someone who is in receipt of such a benefit.
- Full time students travelling from the Isle of Wight to study at Havant & South Downs College, will automatically receive college financial assistance towards travel costs due to the expense of travelling over to the mainland. Further financial assistance will be available for those who are in receipt of an income-based benefit. For more details, please speak to an adviser from the Student Travel and Support Office.

### **How to apply**

- Initially, information for the Financial Assistance scheme will be sent out by post, to all new student applicants and continuing students over the summer period.
- Subsequent application forms are available from the Student Travel and Support office (based opposite main Reception at the South Downs Campus and based opposite

Study Central at the Havant Campus), the Student Hub at Alton Campus, via the HSDC website or by phone.

- The completed application form must be returned with any evidence required.

### **3. Discretionary Financial Assistance**

The Discretionary Financial Assistance provides financial support for full and part time students in exceptional and severe financial difficulties. It is specifically designed to respond to hardship and Government Priority Groups such as those whom may become homeless or experience sudden changes in circumstances. All applications are considered individually, and funds will only be granted where a genuine need for assistance has been demonstrated, along with meeting various criteria. The Discretionary Financial Assistance is limited and can only be allocated whilst funding lasts. Assistance cannot be guaranteed in cases of over-demand.

#### **Criteria/Eligibility for Discretionary Financial Support**

- A student must be currently attending a course at HSDC, which is funded by the ESFA (this excludes SC/HC coded courses, HNC/HND, some Level 4 and Level 5 courses, and Treloar-funded courses). Funding will be prioritised to students that meet the following priority groups: -
  - a young lone parent, retraining for employment
  - a significant carer for an adult or child relative
  - statutory education was interrupted
  - has a significant diagnosed mental health condition (appropriate evidence is required)
  - dependant on somebody who has been made redundant in the last 12 months and remains unemployed
  - in care or have recently left care
  - supervised by a Young Offender Officer
  - Household annual gross income is under £25,000

#### **How to apply**

- Any student who wants to apply for the Discretionary Financial Support can request an application form from the Student Travel and Support office (based opposite main Reception at the South Downs Campus and based opposite Study Central at the Havant Campus), the Student Hub at Alton Campus, via the HSDC website or by phone.
- The completed application form must be returned with any evidence required.
- The details presented on the application form will be considered in addition to other relevant background information gathered. If required a case meeting will be held to establish areas where any financial assistance could be best used.

### **4. The 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary Fund (VB)**

The Vulnerable Bursary is designed to support any student who faces genuine financial barriers to participation; the VB provides funding for items such as transport, equipment and uniforms leaving remaining funding to be allocated as a weekly payment direct into the eligible student's bank account. This payment will be based on 100% attendance whilst maintaining a good standard of effort and behaviour.

#### **Criteria/Eligibility for the 16 – 19 Vulnerable Bursary Fund.**

- A Student may be eligible for a bursary of £1,200 a year if they are aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August 2019 and meet *one* of the following criteria.
  - Are in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner
  - Are a Care Leaver or In Care (Local Authority confirmation will be required).

- Are in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payment in their own right.

Where a student is eligible for the VB and is undertaking a course lasting less than 30 weeks, or they are starting later than the planned start date of the course, or their circumstances change during the year and they become eligible part way through their course, the award should be an appropriate proportion of the £1,200.

### **How to apply**

- Any student who wants to apply for the 16 – 19 Vulnerable Bursary can request an application form from the Health and Wellbeing office (at HSDC), the Student Travel and Support office based opposite main Reception at the South Downs Campus and based opposite Study Central at the Havant Campus), the Student Hub (at Alton Campus), via the HSDC website or by phone.
- The completed Bursary application form must be returned with any evidence required.
- The details presented on the application form will be considered in addition to other relevant background information gathered. Usually a case meeting will be held to establish areas where any financial assistance could be best used.
- In exceptional circumstances, HSDC reserves the right to make awards to individual students who do not necessarily meet the list criteria.

## **5. Free Student Meals in Education**

Free Student Meals are available for all eligible students for each day the student attends their study programme or work experience placement, where appropriate.

Eligibility for Free Student Meals is as per the current ESFA 16-19 Free Meals in Further Education Guidance. To be eligible to receive a Free Student Meal, the student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2019 and be in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the qualifying benefits. Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a free meal if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 or have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

A student is only eligible to receive a free meal when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, have made a successful application.

## **6. 19+ Advanced Learning Loans Bursary (ALLB)**

The Bursary is designed to support students aged 19+ who have taken out an Advanced Learner Loan and face genuine financial barriers to participation.

### **Criteria/Eligibility for 19+ Advanced Learning Loans Bursary (ALLB)**

A Student: -

- must be currently attending a level 3 or 4 course (other than HNC/HND) at HSDC, be aged over 19 have had an a 19+ Advanced Learning Loan approved by the Student Loans Company
- **and** in receipt of at least one of the benefits listed below: -
  - Job Seekers Allowance (where there is an Income-Based payment, not solely a National Insurance Credit)
  - Income Support
  - Working Tax Credit (not solely Child Tax Credit)
  - Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
  - Housing benefit
  - Council Tax Support (other than the single person allowance)
  - Employment & Support Allowance (Income-related)
  - Universal Credit (not solely Child Tax element)

## How to apply

- Any student who wants to apply for 19+ Advanced Learning Loans Bursary (ALLB) can request an application form from the Student Travel and Support office (based opposite main Reception at the South Downs Campus and based opposite Study Central at the Havant Campus), the Student Hub at Alton Campus, via the HSDC website or by phone.
- The completed ALLB application form must be returned with any evidence required. The details presented on the application form will be considered in addition to other relevant background information gathered.

## 7. Financial Assistance Offered

Financial Assistance Offered	Financial Assistance		Discretionary Financial Assistance	VB	ALLB
	Full time	Part time			
Age group funding applies to	16-23 and 19+ if course is level 2 or under			16-18	19+
Travel between home and college Full time by way of a bus pass or a contribution towards a train pass Part time by way of refunded public transport fares	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Specified equipment, clothing relating to the course you are intending to study	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Activities such as approved residential and day trips relating to the course you are intending to study	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Refund of necessary work experience expenses including a DBS check	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Specified books relating to the course you are intending to study	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food Vouchers			✓	✓*	
UCAS administration fees	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hepatitis B Vaccinations for Health & Social Care Students if required by the placement provider	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A contribution towards exam fees, if applicable	✓	✓	✓		
Financial assistance towards childcare (student aged 20+)	✓	✓	✓		✓
Refund of travel expenses for up to three University Open Day visits	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

\* Food Vouchers for students on the Vulnerable Bursary will be awarded based on the individual's circumstances

Financial Assistance towards childcare for students who are aged under 20 is funded by the government scheme, Care to Learn.

## 8. How Payments Are Made

- In most cases, no cash payments will be made. Funds will be transferred internally to pay for the items required or vouchers (in exceptional circumstances) issued to purchase food from the college refectories.

- Where a student has been given prior approval to purchase course related items, they will be required to present the receipt to the Student Travel and Support Team (based opposite main Reception at the South Downs Campus, based opposite Study Central at the Havant Campus and based in the Student Hub at Alton Campus). A refund will then be raised by BACs payment.
- Travel Subsidy Payments (based on the cost and area of some bus passes purchased online) will be assessed on a student having attended a full time course (not Higher Education) at HSDC for the duration of the first half term of college; this will be raised by BACs payment after that date (estimated as end of February 2020).

## 9. Conditions

- Student Financial Assistance is provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency; this is a limited sum of money that offers no guaranteed right to assistance.
- Any equipment purchased remains the property of HSDC.
- The following conditions will be clearly indicated to the learner of the funding award on the application form; Financial Assistance is granted on the following conditions; that your attendance record is good, and you are meeting college expectations in line with the HSDC standard. If at any time, your attendance, work or behaviour is unsatisfactory, the funding may be withdrawn or suspended.
- I understand that if I am a student in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit, I need to declare any financial assistance given.
- HSDC will process data related to your application for financial support in accordance with your Learning Agreement. HSDC is committed to protecting your personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Students cannot apply for Financial Assistance, VB or ALLB if they are: -
  - Under 16 at 31st August 2019 (with the exception of home-schooled 14-16 year olds)
  - Enrolled on a Higher Education course
  - On a waged Apprenticeship
  - In Prison or a Young Offender Institution and released on a temporary licence

## 10. Appeals Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the result of your application, you may appeal stating your reasons. Appeal requests must be made either in writing or by email to:

Jacqui Humphreys  
 Personal Assistant to the Vice Principal Finance & Facilities  
 Havant & South Downs College  
 College Road  
 Waterloooville  
 Hants PO7 8AA  
 Tel: 023 9387 9999  
 Email: [jacqui.humphreys@hsvc.ac.uk](mailto:jacqui.humphreys@hsvc.ac.uk)