The purpose of this procedure is to provide financial assistance and guidance to eligible students in receipt of Adult Learner Loans via Student Loan Company.

Students who are in receipt of a Learner Loan (for the full cost of their tuition fees) will be entitled to an Advanced Learner Loan Bursary. The Student Loans company provides loan bursaries to support vulnerable and disadvantaged loan funded students to overcome barriers associated with study which may prevent students from taking part or continuing in learning.

1. **Eligibility**

To be eligible students must;

* + 1. Students must be in receipt of an approved Advanced Learner Loan and provide a confirmation letter.
    2. Be assessed as requiring additional learning support with identified learning difficulties or disabilities
    3. Be enrolled on an advanced Learner Loan funded course
    4. meet the requirements of the fund for example:
* Be living either independently as a single person with a personal income of less than £17,374.50 based on the ESFA low wage gross annual salary
* or reside within a household where the overall income doesn’t exceed the threshold of £29,900 per annum (in line with the National Office for Statistics household disposable income 2019). The personal or household income will be considered against the eligibility criteria (the criteria will only consider the ‘Gross’ income, with the exception of both Child Benefit & Disability Living Allowance; **all** other income/benefits will be included in the household assessment taking into account all individuals living at the address including parents/guardians/step parents/partners/grandparents). Where students, who do not have a personal income, evidence will be required to demonstrate how they are being financially supported. If they are living in a household, they are expected to provide evidence of the household income.
  + 1. Be considered a ‘home’ student for the purposes of ALLB funding meeting the residency requirements. ‘Home’ status is the same for the bursary as it is for fee eligibility purposes.

A ‘Home’ student therefore is;

* + - A citizen of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or have settled status of Rights of Abode in the UK.
    - A student who has been ordinarily resident in EEA or countries determined within EEA for at least 3 years on the first day of learning.
    - A non EEA citizen who has UK government permission to live in the UK, which is not for educational purposes, and have been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least 3 years before the start of learning.
    - A student with refugee status, exceptional or discretionary leave to enter or remain, humanitarian protection, leave outside the rules, Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016, ‘Calais Leave’ to remain or the husband, partner or child of the previous.
    - An asylum seeker within the funding guidance rule of claims.

1.1.6 Students **will not** be eligible if:

* an international student (for fee purposes)
* a student on a higher education (HE) programme
* a prison-based student or learning whilst released on temporary license

1. **Bursary Funding: What can students apply for help with?**
   * 1. Student support funding for financial hardship, childcare and residential costs
     2. Learning support or reasonable adjustments within the context of the Equality Act 2010

Note: please refer to the Childcare procedure for application and guidance.

1. **Bursary Support for students on full time non-residential programmes**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Information | Payment |
| Travel  Students can only apply for travel expenses if they are not living residentially at the College. | * Students must use the most cost effective way of travelling to College. Payment will be made for travel passes on shortest route. * It is expected that Students should utilise the South Pennine Community Transport where possible. * Supporting travel passes (e.g. senior/disabled) must be used to support travel arrangements to College. * The students home address will be used to calculate the shortest route utilising Google Maps as a measuring tool for all claims. * To qualify for assistance with travel costs, a student must live over a 3 miles’ radius from the College. * Exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis for example safeguarding, return home journeys with evidence of request from staff member. * Cost of traveling to University interviews and open days up to a maximum of 3 visits. | * Mileage £0.45 capped @£1,500 * Travel expenses (e.g. bus/train fares) capped at £1,500 * Travel expenses to be paid monthly upon submission of receipts (bus/train tickets) |
| Non-essential course related costs (books and equipment) | * Books * Resources to support studies. * Trips. * Costs relating to these categories may be reimbursed on production of proof of expenditure (receipts, tickets and associated documentation). | £120.00 max |
| Domestic emergencies | * Emergencies which may impact on student ability to study. * Emergency accommodation provided by others. * All domestic emergency funds must be approved by the Assistant Principal Student Experience or a member of ELT. | £750.00 max |
| Emergency Fund | * The Emergency Fund is in place to assist students experiencing a sudden, unexpected and emergency situation, which may impact on their studies. * All emergency funds must be approved by the Assistant Principal Student Experience or a member of ELT. | £50.00 Maximum |
| Examination fees | * Retake fees will be paid for where there is no further period of learning. * Fees will be paid directly to exam board on student behalf. | Limited to one retake per academic year. |
| UCAS application costs | * Where students apply for University via UCAS the cost can be reimbursed with evidence of payment. | £22.00 (one choice) and up to £26.50 for max of five choices |
| Accommodation costs related to University admission days or College closures. | * Students who may wish to visit University open days may receive support towards accommodation. * To qualify for financial support, the University should be in excess of 4 hours travel distance. | Up to £60.00 per night.  Maximum 1 night. |
| **Hardship Bursary** | * A bursary living allowance to support living costs whilst studying. * Allowance will be paid in 10 monthly payments during the course. * Payment will not be made in advance unless exceptional circumstances and by authorisation of ELT member. | £600 maximum per academic year paid in 9 monthly instalments. |

1. **Bursary Support for students on full time residential programmes.**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Information | Payment |
| Non-essential course related costs (books and equipment) | * Books * Resources to support studies. * Trips. * Costs relating to these categories may be reimbursed on production of proof of expenditure (receipts, tickets etc.). | £120.00 max in one academic year |
| Emergency Fund | * The Emergency Fund is in place to assist students experiencing a sudden, unexpected and emergency situation, which may impact on their studies. * All emergency funds must be approved by the Assistant Principal Student Experience | £50.00 max |
| Examination fees | * Retake fees will be paid for where there is no further period of learning. * Fees will be paid directly to exam board on student behalf. | Limited to one retake per academic year. |
| UCAS application costs | * Where students apply for University via UCAS the cost can be reimbursed with evidence of payment. | £22.00 (one choice) and up to £26.50 for max of five choices |
| Accommodation costs related to University admission days or College closures. | * Students who may wish to visit University open days may receive support towards accommodation. * University should be in excess of 4 hours travel distance. * Cost of travelling to University interviews and open days up to a maximum of 3 visits. * Mileage claims will be made by Google maps shortest distance. | Up to £60.00 per night.  Maximum 1 night.  Mileage £0.45 or cheapest train/bus ticket. |
| **Residential Access** | * Residential accommodation costs. Payment will be made directly to Estates. * A meal allowance will be loaded onto student ID card. * The ID card must be worn at all times whilst at Northern College. * Meal allowance will cover a breakfast, lunch and evening meal. Payment made directly to Estates/Catering Team. * All break time food and beverages must be paid for by student. * An allowance for one laundry token per week. |  |

1. **Learning Support** 
   * 1. Learning support **is not an** income based support but will require evidence of disability or learning difficulty.
     2. Students are expected to attend an assessment to identify student support needs; where students do not attend assessments no funding can be allocated.
     3. The student must agree with the learning needs assessment outcome.
     4. Support may include costs associated with a non-medical personal helper, items of specialist equipment or software, or enhanced travel or other course-related costs.
     5. The costs must relate to access to study - the support will not cover everyday difficulties which are not directly associated with students learning on programme.
     6. Costs will be assessed on an individual basis and will be met by the College who will pay for services or equipment as appropriate.
     7. Any equipment purchased become the property of the College and should be returned at the end of the study period.
2. **Application and Assessment Process**

* + 1. Loans Bursary application forms are available from Student Support Services or Northern College website.
    2. Students must apply for the Bursary funding with supporting evidence as soon as possible with confirmation of loans letter.
    3. Assistance with the application process will be available on request. **Any student found to have made a false claim for financial support or anyone who disregards the conditions of assistance will have their support suspended and may lose their College place.**
    4. All students are responsible for alerting the Work and Pensions Department of College financial support where applicable.
    5. The College reserves the right to review and adjust payments to meet student need and the availability of funds. Payments may therefore increase or decrease according to availability and distribution of funds. Allocation of Bursary support will depend on availability of funds.
    6. Where there is a significant change to circumstances (personal or otherwise) during the academic year i.e. a transition into residential, an application for re-assessment may be required.
    7. Where a student is unwilling to provide evidence of income no assessment or resulting support can take place.
    8. Students will be requested to return any items of equipment if they withdraw from College before completing their studies and where students withdraw from their programme of study prior to their application being processed/approved, no support will be awarded.
    9. Students must have their own bank account, and bank details will be retained for payment processing.
    10. Payments will be stopped from withdrawal date if a student leaves the course or the date of exclusion if excluded from programme. This applies where students are in receipt of payments.
    11. All applications are treated as confidential. However, there may be occasions where it is necessary for the Student Support Services Officer to contact staff within College for additional information for processing or monitoring purposes.
    12. Students will be notified of declined applications for Learning Support by email. If a student wishes to appeal against the declined application this must be made in writing within 10 working days of date of decline. Appeals can only be made based on either a change in circumstances or household income changes.
    13. The information given within the application is used in line with Advanced Learner Loan funding rules 2021 to 2022 and Northern College Financial Support Policy 2021/2022.
    14. All application data is stored confidentially and retained for a period of seven years and is subject to Northern College Financial Regulations.
    15. All information given within application is subject to GDPR and Data Protection regulations. Personal information and any supporting evidence will be used by the Financial Support Service for College/audit purposes.
    16. Northern College work is aligned to the Equality Act 2010 which prohibits unfair treatment, eliminating discrimination and advances opportunity of all it students. Within this context this policy aims to remove financial disadvantage and take steps to meet the needs of those students who are most financially vulnerable.

1. **Assessment Evidence**
   * 1. Students who apply for a Loans Bursary must provide evidence that they meet the criteria for personal or household income. This is based on the taxable income during the course.
     2. A single student living alone must have a gross personal income of less than £17,374.50.
     3. Students who are married, or living with a partner or civil partner must have a gross household income of less than £29,900. Assessment will be based on personal income and spouse/partner’s gross taxable income combined.
     4. For students that are living with their parent(s), assessment will be based on personal income and parents’ gross taxable incomes combined. If a parent has remarried, lives with a partner or has entered into a civil partnership, this income will be included.
     5. If a student is married or living with a partner or civil partner *and* lives with parents’, an assessment will be based on personal income and spouse/partner’s gross taxable income. In these circumstances parental income will not be taken into account.
     6. Students will be regarded as independent where:

* They are 25 or over at the start of the academic year in which the course begins
* They have been married or entered into a civil partnership before the start of the academic year in which the course begins
* They have care of a child or children on the first day of the academic year in which the course begins

In these circumstances parental income will not be taken into account.

* + 1. When assessing hardships applications, the following documents **are included** in the

assessment and will be required as evidence

* Earned income (3 x monthly wage slips or 4 x weekly wage slips)
* Out of work benefits for example Income Support/universal Credit, JSA, ESA, Incapacity Benefit etc. (to be dated within the last 3 months, Universal Credit document must contain all pages)
* Bank statements dated within the last 3 months
* Unearned taxable income for example rental income
* Self-employment proof of most recent tax return
* Working and Child Tax credits (full letter)
* CSA or private maintenance payments
* State pensions (including War/Military pensions)
* Private pensions
  + 1. The following **will not be included** in the assessment.
* Child benefit
* Housing /Council tax benefit
* Carers allowance
* Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independent Payments
* The ‘childcare element’ of Working Tax Credit
  + 1. It is the students’ responsibility to provide all supporting documentation. Failure to do so will delay the application process. It is advised that where a student sends their application (including supporting evidence) by post, postage should be via Recorded or Special delivery. Supporting documentation may also be scanned and sent digitally but must be the original copy. Please note; students may be asked to provide the original paper copy if submitted digitally.
    2. Northern College will not be responsible for lost or stolen documents.
    3. All original copies of supporting evidence will be returned to the applicant. Copies will be retained for audit purposes.
    4. Assessments for Learning Support will only be undertaken once Learner Loan letter has been received. Assessments will be completed where possible before the start of course.
    5. Applications may take up to six weeks to process during the enrolment period at Northern College. Allocated Bursaries funds will be backdated to the start of the course.
    6. Once an application has been assessed and where the support is awarded, students will be notified by Northern College email.
    7. It is the students’ responsibility to monitor emails to ensure Bursary notifications/updates are read and understood.

1. **Payment of Bursary Support** 
   * 1. Payments are attendance based and will be limited to term time attendance unless

the student is a full time residential student. All payments will be made directly into the student’s bank account unless payment is being made to a service provider i.e. a childcare provider or in the form of a bus pass.

* + 1. Failure to achieve the minimum attendance criteria of at least 100% may result in payments being stopped for the week in question and, with the exception of childcare payments, within this context there is no recourse for appeal.
    2. Payments cannot be made into accounts on the student’s behalf other than where Power of Attorney is in place. Bursary payments cannot be made into a Credit Union account.
    3. Bursary Support is awarded as a set monthly payment based on the fund from which they are receiving support and the number of planned learning hours.
    4. Students will be paid in line with the attendance policy and as such any authorised absences will be seen as a negative mark which will impact on financial support payments.
    5. Any absence from classes may result in the support being suspended and payments may be stopped. Authorised absence will include the following:
* Sickness supported by a medical certificate, hospital or doctor’s letter
* Attendance at medical appointments
* Parental leave to care for a sick child
* Attendance at the funeral of a family member or close friend
* Confirmed breakdown of travel arrangements
* Attendance at course or mandated probationary proceedings
* Work experience placements or work interviews
* Study leave where authorised by the programme manager
* Religious festivals
* Driving tests
* Adverse weather conditions
* Authorised absence will not be granted for holidays taken during term time

**6. Appeals and complaints**

6.1.1 Appeals can only be made against the ‘process’.

6.1.3 All appeals should be made in writing to the Head of Finance. Appeals should be submitted in writing or by email to; Student Support Services Officer, Student Support Services, Northern College, Wentworth Castle, Stainborough, Barnsley, S75 3ET.

6.1.4 Appeals will be considered by the Head of Finance and approved by a member of ELT. Where an appeal is upheld the student will be notified in writing and there will be no further recourse.

6.1.5 All appeals will take into account presented evidence from the student in relation to their financial circumstances with any relevant information from the Student Support Services and other key staff within Northern College.

6.1.6 All appeal decisions are final.

6.1.7 Complaints should be made in writing in the first instance in line with Northern College complaints procedure.

If you require further information or support, please contact Student Support Services on: 01226 776000 or email studentservices@nothern.ac.uk