

1. Overview

Policy Title	Financial Support Policy 2023/24
Who does the policy apply to?	This policy will outline the guidance and implementation of student financial support. This policy and its underpinning guidance should be read by all students, staff and governors.
Aims	To provide financial assistance and guidance to eligible students enrolled on programmes funded by the ESFA (Education & Skills Funding Agency), SYMCA (South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority) and WYCA (West Yorkshire Combined Authority) or students in receipt of a SFE (Student Finance England) Loans Bursary. This process will be transparent and based on Government assessment criteria which ensures access to, and participation in, adult learning.
To be read in conjunction with	Northern College Fees Policy Northern College Student Financial Support Guidance 2023/24 Northern College Financial Regulations
Further advice may be sought from	Assistant Principal Student Experience Head of MIS Head of Finance
Review arrangements	<p>This policy will be reviewed annually.</p> <p>This policy may be reviewed outside of this cycle should operation and/or legislative guidance dictate.</p> <p>Further details regarding revisions and review cycle can be found at sections 4 and 5.</p>

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the allocation and distribution of financial assistance and supporting guidance to eligible students on ESFA, SYMCA and WYCA Adult Education Budget (AEB) funded courses or students in receipt of a SFE (Student Finance England) Loans Bursary. Northern College is committed to supporting lifelong adult learning using funds where appropriate to remove barriers to education for those in financial hardship.

3. Aim

- 3.1 Northern College will have an appropriate and transparent framework to identify, administer, monitor and record spending within the context of student financial support.
- 3.2 The College will have robust systems to facilitate the allocation of student financial support.
- 3.3 To ensure accountability, all allocations will be reported within the College Individual Learner Records.

4. Policy

- 4.1 All Northern College financial support will be assessed within the following categories: hardship, childcare, residential access, and ICT & devices. The process for this will be contained within the Adult Education Budget (AEB) Financial Support Procedures and the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary (ALLB) procedure and the Childcare Financial Support Procedures. All criteria, childcare elements, residential assessment process, fund allocations and specific hardship awards will be outlined within these procedures.
- 4.2 The College may make discretionary payments in exceptional circumstances. This must be approved by a member of ELT.
- 4.3 The College may make in-year changes to procedures where there are changes to funding or additional monies received.

Eligibility - To be eligible for financial support students must be;

- 4.3.1 a resident within prescribed devolved areas (West Yorkshire or South Yorkshire), for ESFA funded AEB courses.
- 4.3.2 a resident in England in a non-devolved authority area, for ESFA funded AEB courses.
- 4.3.3 in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan from Student Finance England.
- 4.3.4 eligible for a Student Loan Bursary, a loan application must have been approved before they can access a student support grant.
- 4.3.5 the College will assess those who meet the low wage threshold in line with the relevant funding guidance. Where there is no individual taxable income, the household income will be required for assessment purposes.

4.4 Residency eligibility

- 4.4.1 Students must meet the residency requirements set out in the ESFA's AEB Funding Rules 2023 to 2024 - [ESFA funded adult education budget: funding rules 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118422/ESFA_funded_adult_education_budget_funding_rules_2023_to_2024_-_GOV.UK.pdf) and residency requirements as set out by the WYCA or SYMCA.

4.5 Responsibility

- 4.5.1 Where a student has made a self-declaration in relation to their financial status, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the Department of Work and Pension of any income allowances through Student Financial Support.
- 4.5.2 It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they have a personal current bank account through which student financial support BACS payments can be made.
- 4.5.3 It is the responsibility of the College to ensure a fair and transparent process for administration and distribution of student financial support reflecting the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 4.5.4 The College will ensure that the student is enrolled on to programme within first day of attendance or before and that all enrolment documentation is signed and checked in line with funding guidance.
- 4.5.5 The College will have a transparent process for application and ensure students are made aware of this process pre course or on the first day of course programme.
- 4.5.6 The Student Services Team will administer funds in accordance with funding guidelines as determined by the relevant funding agencies, and financial audit requirements.
- 4.5.7 Where a student receives childcare funding, it is the responsibility of the student to maintain the contract with the childcare provider and any subsequent financial payments.
- 4.5.8 If a student makes an application for residential status at the College, then the process will comply with the funder's local arrangements for eligibility.
- 4.5.9 The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring funding guidelines and Northern College Financial Regulations are adhered to, including 5% administration management.
- 4.5.10 The Policy and Finance Committee is responsible for the approval of this policy and its review.
- 4.5.11 The Assistant Principal Student Experience and Head of Finance are responsible for the consideration of complaints and appeals with regards to financial support.

4.6 Monitoring, Review and Dissemination

- 4.6.1 The policy and administration procedures will be reviewed annually in line with:
- ESFA and all devolved authorities' guidelines and audit requirements
 - Annual budget, mid-year funding forecast and financial outturn
 - College strategic priorities and curriculum plan
 - Student feedback
 - Audit Committee approval

4.6.2 The College will ensure that accurate records are retained to evidence students' financial eligibility, including application and enrolment alongside individual allocations and payments.

4.6.3 Information on financial support will be disseminated via the following:

- Student enrolment and induction sessions
- Staff induction and training events
- Open days and IAG, interviews and enrolment
- The College website/social media
- Student Progress Meetings

4.6.4 This policy and its underpinning procedures will be located on Staff-Team Channel within Microsoft Teams and College website.

4.7 Appeals and complaints

4.7.1 Student Support Services will make available details of the appeals procedure where appropriate. Only appeals relating to process will be considered.

4.7.2 All complaints will follow the College complaints procedure.

4.8 Data Protection Act 2018 and UKGDPR (UK General Data Protection Regulation)

4.8.1 Northern College is a data controller in terms of the Data Protection Act and UKGDPR. Personal information and any supporting evidence will be used by the Financial Support Service for College/audit purposes. The College has responsibility to administer public funds (financial support) in manner which is in line with government guidance and the law. In the processing of submitted forms, the College will be mindful of unlawful applications and the prevention of fraud.

4.9 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

4.9.1 Northern College work is aligned to the Equality Act 2010 which prohibits unfair treatment, eliminating discrimination and advances opportunity of all its 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.

5 Policy sign off and ownership details

Document Name:	Financial Support Policy 2023/24
Version Number:	4.0
Effective from:	1 August 2023
Next scheduled review date:	July 2024
Policy owner:	Assistant Principal - Student Experience
Approved by:	The Board of Governors

6 Revision history

Version No	Effective date	Revision description/summary of changes	Author
2.0	1 Aug 2021	Review	Assistant Principal - Student Experience
3.0	1 Aug 2022	Review: Include references to South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire Combined Authorities. Update reference to relevant teams. Change the relevant dates. Update Residency eligibility.	Head of Student Support Services.
4.0	1 Aug 2023	Review: Update relevant dates. Remove reference to Covid. Update link to AEB Funding Rules. Add reference to in-year procedural changes.	Head of Student Support Services.