

## **Financial Support Procedures 2023/2024 Adult Education Budget (AEB)**

Northern College is committed to supporting students to access learning where hardship is a barrier to education. These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Financial Support Policy 2023/2024. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance on how eligible students can access financial support. For Local Authority funded courses, students must satisfy the eligibility criteria stated within the appropriate Funding Guidance.

Students who are enrolled onto ESFA, SYCA and WYCA approved learning aim/qualification/courses may be eligible to receive financial support should they meet the eligibility criteria. This is a means-tested fund based on the individual applicant's taxable income. If there is no individual income, then household income will be taken into account. Applications can be submitted prior to enrolment to the course. Awards will be made once the application has been approved and enrolment is completed.

It is advised that students familiarise themselves with this procedure before applying for the Student Financial Support Fund including the conditions for receiving support. This procedure will detail the evidence required to support an application.

Where students do not meet the eligibility for funding allowances and wish to stay residentially, students will be expected to pay full residential costs.

### **1. Eligibility**

To be eligible students must;

- 1.1.1 Be enrolled on a full-time and/or substantial part-time (5 hours and above) ESFA, SYCA or WYCA funded programme.
- 1.1.2 Meet the requirements of the fund and:
  - Have an individual taxable income of less than £23,400
  - If there is no individual taxable income, a household income where the overall income doesn't exceed the threshold of £32,000
- 1.1.3 Meet the residency requirements set out in one or more of the following categories below. Full details of the requirements relating to each category can be found in the ESFA's AEB Funding Rules 2023/2024 as per the Financial Support Policy.
  - UK national and other persons with right of abode.
  - UK national in the EEA.

- EEA national in the UK who has obtained either pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme.
- Other non-UK nationals.
- Family members of the UK and EEA nationals.
- Individuals with certain types of immigration status and their family members.
- Children of Turkish workers.
- Asylum seekers.
- Persons granted stateless leave.

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

- they are in receipt of an Advanced Learning Loan.
- 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

## 2. Funding Awards: What can students apply for help with?

- 2.1.1 The Financial Support Fund is awarded through Government funding and it is assessed and distributed on the basis of Financial Hardship as a 'contribution'. These funds are not an entitlement and should be viewed as a 'contribution only' towards the cost of course related costs including travel. However, in some cases the support awarded may not fully cover the costs incurred by the student.
- 2.1.2 The College will provide the following financial support to students with identified needs within specific categories; hardship, residential access and 20 + childcare (please refer to childcare funding procedures).
- 2.1.3 Please note for students under 20 years of age on the first day of learning applications for childcare support should be made to Care to Learn at [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn)
- 2.1.4 For students who are not eligible for full fee remission for their tuition fees under the criteria set by the ESFA and SYCA, 100% of the tuition fee set by the College will be made through the Discretionary Student Support Fund where the student meets the eligibility criteria for the fund, up to the income threshold of £23,400

### Financial Support for students on substantial programmes (20 weeks or more)

Support	Information	Payment
Travel <u><b>Non-residential</b></u> <i><b>Students can apply for travel expenses for their return journey, each day they attend for their course.</b></i>  <u><b>Residential</b></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students must use the most cost-effective way of travelling to College. Payment will be made for travel passes on shortest route.</li> <li>• It is expected that students should utilise the South Pennine Community Transport where possible.</li> <li>• Supporting travel passes (e.g. senior/disabled) must be used to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mileage £0.45 capped @ £2,000</li> <li>• Travel expenses (e.g. bus/train fares) capped at £2,000</li> <li>• Travel expenses to be paid monthly upon submission of receipts (bus/train tickets)</li> </ul>

<b><i>Students can apply for travel expenses, for one return journey each week they attend College.</i></b>	<p>support travel arrangements to College.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students home address will be used to calculate the shortest route utilising Google Maps as a measuring tool for all claims.</li> <li>• To qualify for assistance with travel costs, a student must live 2.5 miles or more from the College.</li> <li>• Exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis for example safeguarding, return home journeys with evidence of request from staff member.</li> <li>• Cost of travelling to university interviews and open days up to a maximum of 3 visits.</li> </ul>	
Accommodation at college	<p><b><i>For residential students only</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential accommodation costs payment will be made directly to Estates.</li> </ul>	
Meals whilst at college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who meet the meal eligibility entitlement (unemployed/low wage threshold) will receive meals whilst studying on a course at the College.</li> <li>• A meal allowance will be loaded onto student ID card.</li> <li>• The ID card must be worn at all times whilst at Northern College.</li> <li>• Payment made directly to Estates/Catering Team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential students will receive breakfast, lunch and dinner.</li> <li>• Non-residential students will receive lunch.</li> </ul>
Hardship Bursary	<p><b><i>For non-residential students only</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bursary living allowance to support living costs whilst studying.</li> <li>• Allowance will be paid in 10 monthly payments during the course.</li> <li>• Payment will not be made in advance unless exceptional circumstances and by authorisation of ELT member.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £1500 maximum per academic year paid in monthly instalments over the duration of the course.</li> </ul>
ICT Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The loan of ICT equipment, namely a laptop / dongle to aid learning from home.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will be authorised where the student has no other means of accessing ICT equipment to support their studies.</li> <li>• Equipment that is damaged or not returned will be billed for.</li> </ul>	
Non-essential course related costs (books and equipment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books (as recommended by the tutor and not available in the library)</li> <li>• Resources to support studies (as recommended by the tutor).</li> <li>• Trips (as part of the course).</li> <li>• Costs relating to these categories may be reimbursed on production of proof of expenditure (receipts, tickets and associated documentation).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £120 maximum</li> </ul>
Domestic emergencies	<p><b><i>For non-residential students only</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergencies which may impact on student ability to study.</li> <li>• Emergency accommodation provided by others.</li> <li>• All domestic emergency funds must be approved by the Assistant Principal Student Experience or a member of ELT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £750 maximum</li> </ul>
Emergency Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Emergency Fund is in place to assist students experiencing a sudden, unexpected and emergency situation, which may impact on their studies.</li> <li>• All emergency funds must be approved by the Assistant Principal Student Experience or a member of ELT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £75 maximum</li> </ul>
Examination fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retake fees will be paid for where there is no further period of learning.</li> <li>• Fees will be paid directly to exam board on student behalf.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited to one retake per academic year (if the student is not continuing to study)</li> </ul>
UCAS application costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where students apply for University via UCAS the cost can be reimbursed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £27.50 single fee</li> </ul>

Accommodation costs related to University admission days or College closures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who may wish to visit University open days may receive support towards accommodation.</li> <li>To qualify for financial support, the University should be in excess of 4 hours travel distance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to £60 per night. Maximum 1 night.</li> </ul>
Course fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who are not eligible for full fee remission for their tuition fees under the criteria set by the ESFA, WYCA and SYCA, will have their fees paid using the low wage thresholds specific to the region.</li> <li>For eligible courses only. Does not include loan-funded courses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of the course fee</li> </ul>

### Financial Support for students on short courses (less than 20 weeks)

	Information	Payment
<p>Travel</p> <p><b><u>Non-residential</u></b>  <i>Students can apply for travel expenses for their return journey, each day they attend for their course. Payments are capped at £600 per academic year.</i></p> <p><b><u>Residential</u></b>  <i>Students can apply for travel expenses, for one return journey each course / weekly session they attend college. Payments are capped at £300 per academic year.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payment will be made for travel using a banding system already determined by the College.</li> <li>To qualify for assistance with travel costs, a student must live 2.5 miles or more from the College.</li> <li>Students should utilise the South Pennine Community Transport where possible.</li> <li>Supporting Travel passes (e.g. senior/disabled) should be used to support travel arrangements to College.</li> <li>Requests for payment outside of the pre-determined banding system will be considered in exceptional circumstances only, for example, a safeguarding issue, request authorised by a Designated Safeguarding Officer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return journey paid at:  5 to 10 miles - £3  11 to 15 miles - £5  16 to 20 miles - £7  21 to 25 miles - £9  26 to 30 miles - £11  31 to 35 miles - £13  36 to 40 miles - £15  41 to 45 miles - £17  46 to 50 miles - £19  51+ miles - £21</li> </ul>
Accommodation at college	<p><b><i>For residential students only</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential accommodation costs payment will be made directly to Estates.</li> </ul>	

Meals whilst at college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who meet the meal eligibility entitlement (unemployed/low wage) will receive meals whilst studying on a course at the College.</li> <li>A meal allowance will be loaded onto student ID card.</li> <li>The ID card must be worn at all times whilst at Northern College.</li> <li>Payment made directly to Estates/Catering Team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential students will receive breakfast, lunch and dinner.</li> <li>Non-residential students will receive lunch.</li> </ul>
Non-essential course related costs (books and equipment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Books (as recommended by the tutor and not available in the library).</li> <li>Resources to support studies (as recommended by the tutor).</li> <li>Award limited to £120.00 per academic year (up to 5 courses)</li> <li>Costs relating to these categories may be reimbursed on production of proof of expenditure (receipts, tickets etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£120 maximum</li> </ul>
Examination fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retake fees will be paid for where there is no further period of learning.</li> <li>Fees will be paid directly to exam board on student behalf.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited to one retake per academic year (if the student is not continuing to study).</li> </ul>
Course fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who are not eligible for full fee remission for their tuition fees under the criteria set by the ESFA, WYCA and SYCA, will have their fees paid using the low wage thresholds specific to the region.</li> <li>For eligible courses only. Does not include loan-funded courses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of the course fee</li> </ul>

### 3. Application and Assessment Process

- 3.1.1 Financial Support Fund application forms are available from Student Support Services or Northern College website.
- 3.1.2 Students must apply for the support fund with supporting evidence as soon as possible after their place on the course has been confirmed.
- 3.1.3 Application forms will be considered by the Student Services Team and authorised by the Head of Student Support Services.
- 3.1.4 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.**

- 3.1.5 All students are responsible for alerting the Work and Pensions Department of College financial support where applicable.
- 3.1.6 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 financial support will depend on availability of funds.
- 3.1.7 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.
- 3.1.8 Where a student is unwilling to provide evidence of income no assessment or resulting support can take place.
- 3.1.9 Students may be invoiced for repayment of any funds allocated to them and 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.
- 3.1.10 Students must have their own bank account, and bank details will be retained for payment processing.
- 3.1.11 Financial support may be withdrawn should students be subject to disciplinary procedures. Where a student is in receipt of payments these will be stopped from withdrawal date if a student leaves course or the date of exclusion if excluded from programme.
- 3.1.12 All applications are treated as confidential. However, there may be occasions where it is necessary for the Student Services Team to contact staff within College for additional information for processing or monitoring purposes.
- 3.1.13 Students will be notified of declined applications 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.
- 3.1.14 The information given within the application is used in line with ESFA, SYCA and WYCA funding guidance and Northern College Financial Support Policy 2023/2024.
- 3.1.15 All application data is stored confidentially and retained for a period of seven years and is subject to Northern College Financial Regulations.
- 3.1.16 All information given within application is subject to GBGDPR and Data Protection regulations. Personal information and any supporting evidence will be used by the Financial Support Service for College/audit purposes.
- 3.1.17 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 disadvantages and take steps to meet the needs of those students who are most financially vulnerable.

#### 4. Assessment Evidence

- 4.1.1 Students who apply for financial support must provide evidence that they meet the criteria for individual taxable income, or household income if there is no individual taxable income.
- 4.1.2 Students must have a gross personal income of less than £23,400
- 4.1.3 Students without an individual taxable income, being supported by either a partner, parent or carer, must have a gross household income of less than £32,000.
- 4.1.4 When assessing 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 dates within last 3 months, Universal Credit document must contain all pages)
  - Bank statements dated with 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
- 4.1.5 The following **will not be included** in the assessment.
- Child benefit
  - Housing /Council tax support
  - Carers allowance
  - Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independent Payments
  - The 'childcare element' of Working Tax Credit
- 4.1.6 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.
- 4.1.7 Northern College will not be responsible for lost or stolen documents.
- 4.1.8 All original copies of supporting evidence will be returned to the applicant.
- 4.1.9 Assessments for Financial Support Funds will only be undertaken once enrolment processes are completed.
- 4.1.10 Applications may take up to two weeks to process during the enrolment period at Northern College. Allocated financial support funds will be backdated to the start of the course.
- 4.1.11 Once a financial support application has been assessed and where the support is awarded, students will be notified by Northern College email.
- 4.1.12 It is the students' responsibility to monitor emails to ensure financial support notifications/updates are read and understood.

## 5. Payment of Financial Support Fund

- 5.1.1 Payments are attendance based and will be awarded in line with timetabled sessions for the enrolled programme.
- 5.1.2 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.
- 5.1.3 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.
- 5.1.4 Student payments cannot be made into accounts on the student's behalf other than where Power of Attorney is in place. Student Financial Support payments cannot be made into a Credit Union account.
- 5.1.5 Student Financial 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.
- 5.1.6 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.



- 5.1.7 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
  - Medical appointments (supported by medical cards)
  - Court appearances or mandated meetings
  - Funerals/bereavement (immediate family members)
  - Severe weather problems
  - Religious holidays
  - Probation meetings (supported by Probation Services letter)
  - Financial benefits review meeting (supported by DWP letter)
  - A driving test

## **6. Appeals and complaints**

- 6.1.1 Appeals can only be made against the 'process'.
- 6.1.2 All appeals should be made in writing to the Head of Finance. Appeals should be submitted in writing or by email to; Student Services Team, Student Support Services, Northern College, Wentworth Castle, Stainborough, Barnsley, S75 3ET.
- 6.1.3 Appeals will be considered by the Head of Finance and approved by member of ELT. Where an appeal is upheld, the student will be notified in writing and there will be no further recourse.
- 6.1.4 All appeals will consider 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.
- 6.1.5 All appeal decisions are final.
- 6.1.6 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 [advice@northern.ac.uk](mailto:advice@northern.ac.uk)