

DOCUMENT DETAILS

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Summary	The purpose of this document is to set out the policy for allocating Bursary funds to students for Academic Year 2017/18.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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CONTENTS

1. Background	3
2. Remit of the Funds.....	3
3. Considerations	4
4. Priority Groups.....	5
5. Eligibility.....	5
6. Assessment criteria	7
7. Course fees for 19+ students	9
8. College-related childcare costs	10
9. College-related transport costs.....	12
10. College-related essential equipment.....	13
11. Trips	13
12. Food.....	14
13. Exceptional hardship circumstances	14

1. Background

- 1.1. NCN and Central College merged on the 8th June 2017 to form Nottingham College. Operationally and structurally some changes will not happen immediately and so support may be delivered to students at the former NCN and Central Colleges in slightly different ways. However, every effort has been made to ensure that all students attending Nottingham College will be treated fairly and equitably. The Policy will be amended at a later date during the year if that becomes appropriate.

2. Remit of the Funds

- 2.1. The **16 – 18 Discretionary Bursary Fund**'s purpose is to provide financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation, so they can remain in education.
- 2.2. The Government expects that Funds should be targeted towards those students experiencing the greatest financial disadvantage and/or the highest course-related costs and be sufficient to enable those students to participate in education and training.
- 2.3. Those young people considered the most vulnerable will be eligible to receive a Vulnerable Student Bursary (VSB) of £1,200 a year, assuming they are full-time and there are at least 30 weeks in the course. (If a student is on part-time course or a course lasting less than 30 weeks, then the VSB award should be awarded pro-rata at a rate of £40 per week.)
- 2.4. **Discretionary Learner Support Fund (dLSF)** is intended to support students aged 19+ with a specific financial hardship that prevents them from participating in learning.
- 2.5. dLSF is available to support students studying adult further education and skills in Colleges, External Institutions (EIs), and Sixth Form Colleges. Students, who are eligible for support, are not automatically entitled. Awards are subject to fund availability and it is not an entitlement.
- 2.6. The **Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund** is aimed at helping students who have taken out a loan to cover the cost of their course fees.
- 2.7. Students who are eligible for support are not automatically entitled to it.
- 2.8. Awards are subject to fund availability and it is not an entitlement.

3. Considerations

3.1. Nottingham College will:

- 3.1.1. Consider the availability of other strands of financial support for students (including support funding through DWP and Jobcentre Plus) ahead of consideration for the College Bursary Fund or discretionary funds and ensure that students exercise their entitlement to other forms of financial support before they pursue an application for College Funds via Bursary, Advanced Learner Loans or dLSF.
- 3.1.2. Develop clear criteria showing how Nottingham College will administer and distribute the Funds. These policies will be available to students via the College website and upon request.
- 3.1.3. Assess the student's financial hardship by carrying out an income assessment.
- 3.1.4. Identify the student's specific financial need which may prevent the student participating in FE before making any financial award.
- 3.1.5. Pay 16 – 18 Bursary, Advanced Learner Loans Bursary or dLSF financial awards in the form of goods or services or one-off or regular amounts which are for other than living costs. These should not therefore affect the level of benefits which the student may be entitled to; although Students should notify DWP of any payments they might receive.
- 3.1.6. Notify the student of the outcome of their assessment and confirm the method of funds distributed.
- 3.1.7. Free College Meals will be offered to eligible 16-18 year old students whose household income is from certain income based benefits, or is less than £16,190 and whose families are in receipt of Child Tax Credits only. Each meal will be to a minimum value of £2.41.

4. Priority Groups

- 4.1. Students aged 16-18 who are in care, care leavers, young people in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit and disabled young people in receipt of Employment Support Allowance who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) may be eligible to receive a Vulnerable Student Bursary of £1,200 a year.
- 4.2. Nottingham College will use its discretion to make awards to young people in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of its students. Bursary awards will be targeted towards young people facing financial barriers to participation, such as the costs of transport, meals, books and equipment.
- 4.3. Nottingham College will use its discretion to make awards to 19+ students in ways that best fit their needs and circumstances. Bursary awards will be targeted towards adults facing financial barriers to participation, such as the costs of transport, meals, books, essential equipment and childcare (for students aged 20 and over)
- 4.4. Advanced Learner Loan Bursary will only be awarded to students who have an Advanced Learner Loan approved by the student loan company (studying a level 3, 4, 5 or 6 FE programme).

5. Eligibility

- 5.1. The residency eligibility criteria for the Funds is aligned to the residency criteria addressed in the document *Student Eligibility Guidance*, part of the overall Education Funding Agency (EFA) 16 – 19 /Adult education budget *Funding Guidance 2017/18*. These documents can be downloaded from the websites at:
 - 5.1.1. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advice-for-young-people-16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide#eligibility>
 - 5.1.2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-funding-and-performance-management-rules-2017-to-2018>
- 5.2. Residency criteria are broadly determined by the following statement: They are a citizen of the United Kingdom and Islands, have Right of Abode (the right to live permanently in the United Kingdom without any immigration restrictions), or are a citizen of a country that is within the European Economic Area (EEA) including those with bilateral agreements such as Switzerland.
- 5.3. They have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands or the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA) continuously for at least the previous three years on the first day of learning

- 5.4. Any student or relevant family member who has applied for an extension or variation of their current immigration permission in the UK is still treated as if they have that leave. Keeping this permission applies as long as the application was made before their current permission expired. Their leave continues until the Home Office make a decision on their immigration application.
- 5.5. Therefore, a student or relevant family member, is considered to still have the immigration permission that they held when they made their application for an extension, and their eligibility would be based upon this status.
- 5.6. You can find further information on eligibility from the UK Council for International Student Affairs.
- 5.7. Asylum seekers aged 16 – 18 are eligible to apply for support from the 16 – 18 Bursary fund.
- 5.8. Asylum Seekers aged 19+yrs are eligible to apply for dLSF:
- 5.8.1. If they have lived in the UK for six months or longer while their claim is being considered by the Home Office, and no decision on their claim has been made, or they are in the care of the local authority and are receiving local authority support under section 23C or section 23CA of the Children Act 1989 or section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948
 - 5.8.2. An individual who has been refused asylum and they have appealed against a decision made by the UK government against granting refugee status and no decision has been made within six months of lodging the appeal, or they are granted support for themselves under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, or
 - 5.8.3. They are in the care of a local authority and are receiving local authority support for themselves under section 23C or section 23CA of the Children Act 1989, or section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948.
 - 5.8.4. Asylum Seekers who are eligible for provision will have this provided in the form of course-related books, equipment or a travel pass. Under no circumstances can an asylum seeker aged over 19 receive student support in the form of cash.
 - 5.8.5. Asylum Seekers who are eligible for provision will have this provided in the form of course-related books, equipment or a travel pass. Under no circumstances can an asylum seeker aged over 19 receive student support in the form of cash.
- 5.9. Students must always be enrolled onto an EFA /SFA funded FE Student Responsive funded programme of study before any Bursary or dLSF award will be considered.

- 5.10. Nottingham College will consider the availability of other sources of funding to which the student might be entitled, e.g. New Deal for Lone Parents, New Deal for Partners, mobility component of the Disability Living allowance and tax credits, within the overall assessment process. Participants in the New Deal for Lone Parents scheme may not benefit from full payment of childcare support costs from Nottingham College. They are eligible to apply for dLSF but Nottingham College will take into account the level of individual New Deal benefits in assessing the level of need for support. Participants in all other New Deal options are not eligible for dLSF, as their funding needs are met under the New Deal scheme.
- 5.11. Students must be aged 20 or over to receive support from dLSF funding for childcare.
- 5.12. Advanced Learner Loan Bursary will only be awarded to students (studying a level 3, 4, 5 and 6 programme) who have a loan approved by the Student Loan Company.
- 5.13. Two groups of students aged 19 or over on 31 August 2017 are eligible to apply for help from discretionary bursaries:
- 5.13.1. Those who are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers); and
 - 5.13.2. Those who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

6. Assessment criteria

- 6.1. Support is based on an income assessment and the household income should be less than £25,000 NET income in the last tax year. All students will be required to provide parent/carers/own income evidence in the form of benefit evidence (dated no more than 6 months prior to the application date if applying in July, August or 3 months if applying in September onwards) or Tax Credit Award Notice for the current year (2017-18). Or pay slips (2 months or 8 weeks consecutive) + the current years Council Tax Bill/Statement (2017) will be required, or an official letter from an employer stating NET salary on company letter head and the current years Council Tax Bill/Statement (2017) will be required or other relevant income evidence.
- 6.2. For Students wishing to claim childcare support, proof of guardianship will be required e.g. child benefit letter with the students address on and child's name or benefit letter or tax credit letter with the child's name.
- 6.3. Students aged 16 – 18 who fall into the vulnerable student group should provide evidence appropriate to their circumstance to show they qualify for the Vulnerable Student Bursary (VSB), for example:
- 6.3.1. A letter setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled;

- 6.3.2. Written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked after status from the local authority which looks after them or provides they are leaving care services.
- 6.4. Students identified as vulnerable will be supported from the guaranteed £1,200 VSB (pro rata for part time students). Student's travel costs will be supported from the VSB award – usually by way of an appropriate travel pass, in addition to essential course costs/meals as appropriate. Any remaining balance will be paid to the Student on a regular basis by agreement.
- 6.5. Students aged 19 (age as of the 31st August 2017) and over living with parents / carers, may be assessed independently, if the student is working and receiving a wage themselves. This wage must be a minimum of £6,000 NET income per annum. If the student does not earn this amount they will be assessed on their parents / carer's income. If the student is living with parents and in receipt of benefits such as JSA we will still consider them to be independent.
- 6.6. For 19+ students studying on a level 3,4, 5 or 6 FE programme, in addition to the evidence required as per 5.1, the College will check that a student's Advanced Learner Loan to cover the course fees has been approved before any assessment for financial support is carried out.
- 6.7. Nottingham College will not include Disability Living Allowance/PIP when assessing income of disabled students (*the mobility component however will be considered where an application for travel support is requested*).
- 6.8. Students who are claiming independently but who have dependants themselves are allowed £1,000 per dependant extra income threshold. Where a student is dependent upon parents carer's then again £1,000 extra income threshold per additional dependant is allowed. However, where a student is assessed as independent but living with parents/ carer's there will be no allowance made for additional siblings living in the parental home.
- 6.9. Any students who may be eligible for funding from an external source will be required to access the external fund before any dLSF will be considered. Funding which is provided by an external source e.g. DWP – mobility component of DLA, will be taken into consideration when making any financial award for travel.
- 6.10. All awards will be made on the basis that a student should aim to achieve an acceptable level of attendance each term, which will ensure the success on their programme of study, and they should adhere to the Student Code of Conduct. Payments and support will be stopped if a student is excluded from college. Failure to have achieved this required level of attendance will require an intervention with the Personal Success Coach/ Learner Achievement Coach or Student Finance Team; at this intervention strategies for improving attendance will be discussed. Short term goals will be set to

improve attendance levels. The Student will receive support from the Personal Success Coach/Student Achievement Coach, Student Services and their tutor to meet these goals. Spot checks of attendance may be carried out by the Student Finance Team. Any Students who do not meet acceptable levels of attendance will be highlighted to a Personal Success Coach/ Learner Achievement Coach to initiate interventions to support Students to improve. Further checks may be carried out periodically by the Student Finance Team as required.

- 6.11. All awards are made subject to the availability of Funds allocated in September by the Funding Agencies/Government. Awards will be made on a first come first served basis, and there is no guarantee that late applications will be funded. Students should ordinarily submit applications with full supporting evidence as close to their enrolment date as possible, applications will be assessed in date received order, therefore there are no guarantees that awards will continue to be made due to budget restrictions.
- 6.12. Appeals will be assessed by a panel of which will include Student Services Managers and the Student Finance Coordinator. The Head of Student Services may also sit on the panel. The student finance team will aim to complete 90% of appeals within 10 working days of receipt, when received into the student finance department with all evidence. Appeals will be automatically rejected if they do not provide adequate evidence to support the appeal. The Appeal Panels decision is final and no further appeal will be accepted without additional evidence. Previous successful appeals does not guarantee continued support.
- 6.13. Students entitled to the Vulnerable Student Bursary who are studying less than 30 weeks a year will be awarded on a pro rata basis at a rate of £40 per week. Other part time students may be supported with travel/course costs on a pro rata basis.
- 6.14. The College reserves the right to request the return of any equipment or bus pass provided by the College should the student withdraw before the end of their programme. If this is not returned to College within a reasonable period then a student may be invoiced for the associated costs.

7. Course fees for 19+ students

- 7.1. dLS funding will not be used to generally fund tuition fees for students, however in exceptional cases where a student supplies a letter of appeal with related income evidence to prove that they would not be able to participate in education or training, due to exceptional hardship then this will be considered on a first come first served basis, in line with the boundaries of set faculty budgets, potential increased employability chances, and barriers to progression. **The 19+ Advanced Learner Loans Bursary cannot be used to fund tuition fees.**

- 7.2. dLS funding can be used to support exam and registrations fees and accreditation fees/professional membership fees and any fees/charges payable to external bodies for any student who is in financial hardship, and in receipt of means tested benefit or low income.

8. College-related childcare costs

- 8.1. Students aged 20 (age on 31st August 2016) who require childcare whilst they attend College, will be expected to utilise fully all forms of support available to them firstly before they seek support from the dLS Fund from College. Students must provide proof of guardianship when requesting childcare. This can be in the form of current Child Benefit letter, all pages of means tested benefit or Tax Credits Award Notice with the child's name included.
- 8.2. Full time second year Students will receive funding as a priority
- 8.3. The College will then consider by application date order and place availability within the chosen setting. This will continue until Funds have been exhausted.
- 8.4. **NB: Students should not place their child in any setting until confirmation has been received from the Student Finance team that funding has been approved. Students should make provision for the care of their children during the first few weeks, or have the means to pay for the care in a setting during this time. If eligible then reimbursement of any fees paid will take place once the application has been fully assessed.**
- 8.5. dLS funding will only fund childcare for timetabled hours plus reasonable travel time to and from college.
- 8.6. dLSF and 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund will pay a contribution of childcare costs. The Student will be expected to pay **20%** of their costs. This will need to be paid daily or weekly according to the childcare setting. If this is not possible the student should contact the Student Finance Team to discuss their options which may include the student having to arrange alternative childcare for one timetabled day per week. Where a student incurs a debt and wishes to continue to access childcare support in subsequent academic years this may be revoked by the childcare setting until such debts are cleared. **NB due to limited funds Student Funding cannot pay the student contribution.**
- 8.7. Government funding may be available for children aged two should eligibility criteria be met.
- 8.8. Children aged three (the term following their 3rd birthday) and four year olds are entitled to free childcare of 15 hours per week. From September 2017, there is an extended entitlement of 15 hours for working parents subject to meeting eligibility criteria.

- 8.9. Students will be expected to use these hours whilst studying at College.
- 8.10. The Funds will contribute towards snacks, drinks and meals **included in** the normal childcare provider rates up to the cap amount including associated costs, but **will not cover any costs not included within the usual basic rate charged**. Any changes to sessions required must be notified in advance in writing to the Student Finance Team.
- 8.11. Students will be encouraged to use the College Nursery in the first instance where appropriate. Where this is the case and where the Student is fully enrolled on a course and is eligible for dLSF support, they will be informed by the College nursery if they have an internal nursery place within 2 working days. If a place cannot be offered within this timescale the student will be informed that they can seek a place with an alternative OFSTED approved childcare provider.
- 8.12. Nottingham College Nurseries do not provide breakfast or after school club provision, in these cases then the student should investigate a suitable place and provide the student finding team with details, students should not use the setting until their application has been fully processed unless they are able to pay their own fees.
- 8.13. Nottingham College places a limit on the amount of support for childcare costs. There will also be a cap of £50 per day, £30 per half day, £10 for breakfast club sessions, £12 for after school clubs sessions and £6 per hour for Childminders. A maximum limit of £5000 per annum will apply per household.
- 8.14. If you have a partner at home who is not working they will be expected to care for the child(ren) whilst you are at College. There may be circumstances where a partner cannot care for the children whilst you are attending college, in these cases evidence of the reasons for this will be required. If you have a partner who is also studying, timetables will be considered and if there is an opportunity, partners will be expected to look after the child(ren). If circumstances change then Student Funding Team can reconsider support with supporting evidence. You may wish to seek support from your Personal Success Coach/ Learner Achievement Coach
- 8.15. Students must provide details (School holiday calendar or letter or text from school) of any inset days or school holidays where childcare support will be required which fall outside of the College terms, at least at the beginning of each term, but ideally at the start of the academic year, so that Funds can be allocated. If students do not provide this Nottingham College cannot guarantee that funds will be available, due to limited budgets available in 2017-18.
- 8.16. Subject to availability of dLS Funds, from April onwards a study leave Childcare support scheme may be available. This may entitle every childcare funded Student to receive up to *6hrs of funded childcare to be used for extra study/ revision activities which

are not formally timetabled. These need to be arranged in agreement with the Nottingham College childcare setting/external childcare provider and through the Student Finance Team. Evidence of Exams or a supporting tutor statement will be required.

9. College-related transport costs

- 9.1. Travel costs will only be considered if the student lives **over 1.5 miles** from the College campus at which they study. There may be some exceptions where support can be considered even though the Student lives closer than 1.5 miles e.g. the Student has a medical condition that makes walking difficult (evidence would be required) or the student is a Carer and needs to be able to get home quickly (referrals should be made via PSCs/LACs)
- 9.2. Students who have a Concessionary Travel Pass (covering all hours) will not normally be eligible for transport costs. Consideration may be given where the Student cannot use their Concessionary Pass before 9 am, for example, which would prevent them from attending a 9 am class.
- 9.3. The most cost effective transport should be accessed by the Student and in many cases the support provided will take the form of a pre purchased travel pass from one of the transport operators in the East Midlands area.
- 9.4. Payments for travel outside of travel pass routes will be made on a regular basis via Bank Automated Credit System (BACS) directly into the Student's bank account. However, Nottingham College reserves the right to award travel support in other forms for example pre-paid travel tickets.
- 9.5. Students wishing to travel by car will be paid 20p a mile and 12p per mile for Students using a moped. This award would not normally exceed the amount which would be awarded equivalent to the travel pass – individual exceptions will be considered.
- 9.6. Nottingham College may consider funding travel costs under exceptional / emergency circumstances. Household income evidence should be sought but a discretionary award can be made in an emergency where this is not possible, for example homelessness. A referral through a tutor or PSC/LAC is also required. Emergency referrals should be made to the Manager/Coordinator but anyone from the SFT can make a short term award in an emergency in the absence of the above, this may be in the form of daily travel tickets, subject to arrangements with local transport providers, or food vouchers.
- 9.7. A limited number of cycles will be available for students interested in cycling to College as an alternative method of transport. These will be available to students eligible for support on a long loan basis. Continuing students would not be issued with a new bike each year but the college will pay for a maintenance service.

10. College-related essential equipment

- 10.1. These costs are supplied by each curriculum area via the Head of Faculty/ Faculty Area Manager and will be approved by the Student Services Managers/Student funding team Coordinator prior to the start of the academic year in order for fair and consistent awards to be made.
- 10.2. Students who are required to purchase essential equipment to support their learning should be notified at the application stage of the recruitment process. Nottingham College may charge Students for this essential equipment which can be retained by the student, in some cases the payment will be made to an external recommended supplier which has been sourced for best quality and price. The Student may also have the option of borrowing the clothing or equipment free of charge if it is required to comply with Health & Safety regulations.
- 10.3. Students may be required to pay for other non - learning associated costs e.g. library fees, printing costs, these costs are not eligible in the first instance from the 16 – 18 bursary. An appeal may be submitted to apply for these costs. However any funding would be subject to the availability of funds and the priorities for funding being fully met by the budget at point of application.

11. Trips

- 11.1. Charges may be made for optional extra activities and where the activity is taking place outside a required part of an agreed learning programme. Examples of optional extra activities include theatre, cinema or museum visits or other day or residential visits that are not a requirement of course syllabuses. These costs are eligible for funding unless stated, from the 16 – 18 Bursary Fund or the DLSF fund. Limits may apply. Students may be required to undertake some form of fundraising before dLSF may support.
- 11.2. If a trip costs up to £100 we will meet costs in full. If the cost of the trip is over £100 then we will meet 50% of costs. Tutors must demonstrate that the trip relates to the course.
- 11.3. For any trip to be funded the tutor/course leader must supply an application form which details the students who may be eligible for funding and what funding is required. This must be sent to the Student Services Managers/Coordinator for consideration in advance of the trip - at least 4 weeks prior to the trip date to enable the request to be given due consideration. All trips are subject to Fund availability.

- 11.4. Where a student is progressing onto university with proof we may contribute towards the costs of travel to a maximum of £200. The proof required will be interview invitation letters and valid travel documents.

12. Food

- 12.1. Eligible 16-18 year old students whose household income is from certain income based benefits, or is less than £16,190 and whose families are in receipt of Child Tax Credits only will be awarded a free meal for every timetabled day for the duration of their programme of study. This also includes any day which a student is on work placement as part of their programme of study. A student will receive a minimum of £3.50 per day.
- 12.2. For all other 16 – 18 year old and 19+ students whose household income is below £25,000, may be entitled to receive a contribution towards food whilst attending college. The amount of contribution will be dependent upon availability of funds each term. Students will be notified of their awards on completion of their application assessment.

13. Exceptional hardship circumstances

- 13.1. On occasion where a student is in severe exceptional financial hardship, support may be sought via a hardship application or an appeal letter/email. This application must be supported by the PSC/LAC or tutor.
- 13.2. A student in need of emergency hardship funding should be assessed by a Student Services Manager/Student Finance team Coordinator, working in collaboration with the PSC/LAC and tutor where appropriate to ensure that a student may continue on programme until any longer term welfare issues are addressed. Travel tickets and meals in the College refectory will be provided until longer term solutions are found. The College will work with external agencies to ensure that a student receives all the support available to them.