



## Student Financial Support Policy & Guidelines 2021-22

### Background

For 2021-22, Bolton College has received the following allocation of funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

- Further Education Free Meals Fund
- 16-18 Bursary Fund
- 19+ Hardship Fund
- 20+ Childcare Support Fund
- Advanced Learning Loans Bursary Fund
  
- The College also processes applications from students who are applying for Care 2 Learn.

This funding is to support eligible students studying further education courses funded by the ESFA and to help students meet the costs of participating in post 16 education. The ESFA Guidance related to these funding streams states how the funds should be allocated and prioritised.

In addition, students aged 19+ and studying on Level 3 and above ESFA funded courses who do not qualify for a waiver under First Full Level 3 or Second Full Level 3 rules may apply for an Advanced Learning Loan to help cover the cost of their fees.

Some of the main tenets of the guidance for funds issued directly by the College are as follows:

- There can be no virement between 16-18 funding streams and 19+ funding streams
- Funds must be directly linked to the individual needs of students
- The College can use up to 5% of the total allocations to meet the costs of administering the funds.

Enrolling on a learning programme or course can be expensive for some students with low incomes. Therefore before a student starts a course consideration should be given to costs such as:

Tuition Fees  
Examination / Registration Fees  
Equipment and Materials  
Uniform and Kit  
Travel Costs  
Childcare  
Food

To ensure finance is not a barrier to accessing courses and retention and achievement, the College will promote these funds and other sources of financial assistance to help students who are in hardship. However, students should note that these funds are limited, and awards from these funds will only be made where sufficient funds are available to do so. The College may refuse applications once a fund is exhausted.

## Policy for 2021-22

### Discretionary Bursary Students (16-18's and 19+ on EHCP's)

For 2021-22, the College has implemented the following:

- The income threshold for qualifying students' families be £25,000.
- Discretionary Bursary Students will qualify for Discretionary Free College Meals (DCM) in 2021-22. They will receive a meal at £3 for each day in College or attending online. The qualification distance for assistance with travel will be reduced to 1 mile (1.6km).
- The Our Pass cards cost £10 each and are valid to August 2022. Students eligible for a Discretionary Bursary will need to purchase their "Our Pass" on line and will then be eligible for a refund of £10 through the Bursary. The "Our Pass" enables students to travel free of cost on Greater Manchester transport for 7 days per week.
- Out of borough students will receive "Cash for Travel" as there is no cross boundary pass to cover their travel expenses.
- Applications for financial support to be made via an online form.

### Adult Learners

#### Discretionary Support Funds (DSF) or Loans Bursary Funds (LBF)

- Travel Support standard daily rate will be £6 per day for each day the student attends learning in College – disabled students, and students travelling from outside Greater Manchester, will receive higher rates.
- Childcare Funds – students who qualify to pay 20% of the costs of the childcare they need to attend College, with the College to pay 80%).
- There will be a limit on the **daily** value of assistance provided by the College for Childcare of £45. This is necessary to ensure sufficient funds are available throughout the academic year.
- DSF to help meet the cost of tuition fees for Asylum Seekers from outside Greater Manchester, to compensate for the removal of NASS from the qualifying benefits for fee waivers (GM Asylum Seekers still eligible for fee waiver)
- Applications for financial support to be made via an online form.

## **Further Education Free Meals Fund**

### Student Eligibility

Free College Meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. Free College Meals are available to further education students where they are:

- Aged 16 to 18 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021, including students on ESF provision
- Aged 19 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- Aged 19 to 24 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

### **AND**

The students, or their parents, **must** be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC)
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa

For more information on eligibility, see here:

[Free meals in further education funded institutions: guide for the 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-for-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year)

## **The Process**

### Application

Any student or parent/ carer of students aged 16-18, or a 19+ Continuer, wishing to apply for Free College Meals will need to apply online using the "16-18 Application Form for Financial Support for Learners 2021-2" application form. Any student (or parent /carers of students) aged 19-24 with an EHCP wishing to apply for Free College Meals will need to apply using a "19+ Application form for Financial Support for Adult Learners 2021-2" application form.

They will need to supply the following information:

- Student's personal information, e.g. name, DOB, address etc.
- Name of learning programme
- Household income information
- Student declaration to confirm their understanding and observance of terms and conditions
- Parents' or carers' declaration to confirm understanding and agreement to terms and conditions (where applicable)

The Evidence required to support the application will be as follows, to be uploaded via the Learner Hub:

- Evidence of the qualifying benefits (outlined above) for example an award notice or letter from Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) or HMRC.

Evidence of EHCP for students aged 19-24 will be provided by the College Learner Support Team

### **Types of Support**

Each student will be allocated £3 for each day they are required to study, accessed by the Fingerprint system on site.

For students on work placement, or should further lockdowns occur, this to be paid directly into a nominated bank account. Supermarket vouchers will be provided for those students who do not have banking facilities.

### **Assessment**

Assessment will be carried out by the Student Finance Team.

## **16-18 Bursary Fund Policy**

### **Priorities**

#### **Priority Group 1 – Those young people entitled to the Student Support Allowance**

Student Support Allowance is available to young people who are under 19 on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 (Aged 16-18), who meet ESFA eligibility to study post 16 college courses and who meet the criteria set out below:

- in the care of the local authority, or a recent care leaver
- receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right 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
- receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right **as well as** Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

#### **All other awards are subject to funding availability**

#### **Priority Group 2 – Those young people who qualify for Discretionary Bursaries**

Discretionary Bursaries are available to:

- young people who are aged at least 16 years but under 19 on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 (aged 16-18), who meet ESFA eligibility to study post-16 further education college courses;
- young people who are aged 19 on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 who meet ESFA eligibility to study post-16 further education college courses and are entering the second year of a two year programme of study in 2021-22;
- young people who are aged 19 to 24 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan)

and who meet the criteria set out below:

- **Those young people who are struggling to meet the costs of attending college and who come from a home which has a combined annual gross income of under £25,000**

### **Types of Support**

16-18 Bursary Fund support provided through Bolton College will take the form of provision of services or equipment supporting the beneficiary to engage in learning or training. It is recommended that expenditure is itself prioritised in the following way:

Support Priority 1 – Student Support Allowance: £1,200 per 36 week course (or pro rata for shorter courses / late starters) to all students who meet Priority group 1 criteria (as above). Payments will be made weekly in arrears direct to the student by BACS Credit payment. Cash payments can be made where a student is unable to obtain banking facilities.

This fund is not limited, as the College draws funding from the ESFA as each eligible student is identified.

Support Priority 2 – Essential Equipment Bursary: For students who meet Priority Group 1 and 2 criteria. This is allocated for equipment which tutors deem essential for completion of the course.

Some College departments will purchase essential equipment on behalf of their students; for students who qualify for the Bursary, these costs will be reimbursed to the Departments by the Student Finance Team.

Any essential equipment paid for by the College through the Bursary Funds becomes and remains the property of the College and may be recalled by the College should the student leave the course early, or at the end of the course. Please note essential equipment does not include the purchase of stationery. This level of support is integral to supporting student achievement.

Support Priority 3 – Travel Bursary: For students who meet Priority Group 2 criteria, and whose journey from home to their College Campus is more than 2.5 kilometres (Google Maps and AA Route Planner used as the tools to assess distance). This is to support journeys to and from college. In most cases where the student does not qualify for the Our Pass scheme, the College provides a student with cash payments into their bank account to refund their travel costs. This level of support is integral to removing barriers to attendance and retention.

Support Priority 4 – Hardship Bursary: For students who meet Priority Group 2 criteria, the will make payments equivalent to £10 per week, in instalments at the end of each half term.

Support Priority 5 – Where a student is suffering from severe financial hardship due to domestic emergency, financial assistance may be agreed on an exceptional basis by the College's Awards Committee. These awards will be made on a case by case basis, and do not set a precedent for other awards.

The allocation of Discretionary Bursaries to students will be dependent on beneficiaries meeting the College's attendance requirements of 90% over the College year. Students should also note that this fund is limited, and awards from the fund will only be made where sufficient funds are available to do so. The College may refuse applications once the fund is exhausted.

### **Eligibility for support from the 16-18 Bursary Fund**

To be eligible for help from the 16-18 Bursary students must be from Priority Group 1 or 2 and meet the age eligibility criteria stated above. Students must also satisfy residency criteria and be enrolled on an appropriate course of study. More details regarding eligibility can be found at

[16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2021-to-2022-academic-year)

Bursaries cannot be paid to students on Higher Education (HE) courses, waged Apprentices, or young people in prison or released on temporary licence from custody. Any students who are unsure of their eligibility for support should contact Student Services.

## The Process

### Application

All individuals wishing to receive help from the Bursary will need to apply using a "16-18 Student Financial Support 2021-22" form (except for those students aged 19-24 with an EHCP who should use the "19+ Student Financial Support" Form) in which they will need to supply the following information:

- Student's personal information, e.g. name, DOB, address etc.
- Name of Learning programme
- Household income information for either:  
Student living independently or students living as a dependent of parents /carers
- A student statement requesting support
- Student declaration to confirm their understanding and observance of terms and conditions
- Parents' or carers' declaration to confirm understanding and agreement to terms and conditions (where applicable)

The Evidence required to support the application will be as follows:

#### Priority Group 1

Applications from students meeting these criteria can be made at any time during the academic year and must supply one of the 3 types of evidence named below:

- Letter from Local Authority Children's Services confirming "Looked After" or "Leaving Care" status
- Letter from Benefits Agency confirming receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit
- Letter from Benefits Agency confirming receipt of one of Disabled Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments AND ALSO a letter from the Benefits Agency confirming receipt of Employment Support Allowance

#### Priority Group 2

**Applications from students meeting these criteria should be made no later than the start of the half term holiday following their date of enrolment. The college retains the right to extend this deadline where appropriate.**

- Tax Credit Award Notice for household for 2021-22, all pages
- Any current benefits agency letter dated within the 6 months prior to the application
- Pension Credit Award Notice for current year
- Asylum Seekers documents/letter or ID card from Home Office and ARC card.
- Where the above documents are not available, Student Finance Team will agree on valid alternatives with the applicant on a case by case basis

### Assessment

Applications to be made online via the Financial Support page of the College website. Assessment and interviews (where appropriate) will be carried out by the Student Finance Team.

The level of support awarded will be determined by household income evidence.

## **Adult Financial Support Fund Policy**

For 2021-22, the College has been allocated monies from the ESFA to support adults with the costs of studying at College. These are

- Discretionary Learner Support Funds (DSF) – this includes 19+ Hardship funds for travel costs and exceptional awards for Emergency Funds and 20+ Childcare Support funds
- Advanced Learning Loans Bursary Fund (LBF) – this includes support for students with Additional Learning Needs, Childcare support, and Travel, and also to approve exceptional awards for Emergency funds.

### **19+ Hardship Funds**

The ESFA provides College with the 19+ Hardship Funds to provide financial help to eligible students aged 19+. The 19+ Hardship Fund can help meet costs such as travel, essential equipment (specific conditions apply) and emergency assistance (but only in exceptional cases). It is a means tested fund and the amount a student may receive depends on their family gross household income. The fund provides support to students who are experiencing financial hardship. Awards from the fund are made to individual students on a discretionary basis. Any award is made subject to satisfactory attendance at college. Students should also note that these funds are limited, and awards from the fund will only be made where sufficient funds are available to do so. The College may refuse applications once the fund is exhausted.

Where a student is eligible for an Advanced Learning Loan, they are not eligible for assistance from 19+ Hardship Funds, but may be eligible for help from the Loans Bursary Fund (see below).

### **Priorities**

The income threshold for qualification for 19+ Hardship Funds has been set for 2021-22 at the following levels:

- Student (Single) - annual gross income less than or equal to £21,000
- Student (Living with Partner) – annual gross family income less than or equal to £25,000

Other priority groups include:

- Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Those in care or recently left care
- Those acting as carers for a family member or friend
- Those on probation
- Those eligible for fee remission
- Those in receipt of means tested benefits i.e. Income Support
- Students taking a Skills for Independent Living or Sensory programme

### **Types of Support**

**Support Priority 1** – Travel Costs. This is to support students who meet the financial criteria, and whose journey from home to their College Campus is more than 1 mile (1.6 kilometres - Google Maps is used as the tool to assess distance). The College will be paying travel costs at a standard rate of £6.00 per day for students who travel solely within the Greater Manchester area. Students who travel from outside Greater Manchester or who are disabled and cannot use public transport may be eligible for a higher rate of assistance. Payments will be made to students in six instalments, the first as soon as

possible after the application is approved and each subsequent payment will be made at the start of each half term. This level of support is integral to removing barriers to attendance and retention.

The continued payments of Travel Costs to students will be dependent on beneficiaries meeting the College's attendance requirements of 90% over the College year. The College reserves the right to review a student's entitlement where attendance drops below this figure.

Support Priority 2 – Food Support. This is to support students who meet the financial criteria. The College will be paying Food Support costs at a standard rate of £2.00 per day. Payments will be made to students in six instalments, the first as soon as possible after the application is approved and each subsequent payment will be made at the start of each half term. This level of support is integral to removing barriers to attendance and retention.

The continued payments of Food Support Costs to students will be dependent on beneficiaries meeting the College's attendance requirements of 90% over the College year. The College reserves the right to review a student's entitlement where attendance drops below this figure.

Support Priority 3 – Essential Equipment. This is only open to students who do not have their fees waived in full, as those students (Fully Funded students) students must be supplied by the College with the equipment they require to successfully complete their course (ESFA Funding Guidance 2021-22). Students aged 19+ taking a Level 3 or higher qualification (but not HE) cannot apply for equipment costs through the LBF, as Loan Funded students must be supplied by the College with the equipment they require to successfully complete their course (ESFA Funding Guidance 2021-22).

This priority is allocated for equipment which tutors deem essential for completion of the course. College can purchase the essential equipment on behalf of the student. Alternatively, if the student buys this essential equipment, and keeps the receipt, then College will offer an appropriate refund of the costs. College only pays for essential equipment where the cost is greater than £20, and does not pay for stationery. Any essential equipment paid for by the College through the 19+ Hardship Fund becomes and remains the property of the College and may be recalled by the College should the student leave the course early, or at the end of the course. This level of support is integral to supporting student achievement.

Support Priority 4 – Emergency Assistance. Where a student is suffering from severe financial hardship due to domestic emergency, financial assistance may be agreed on an exceptional basis by the College's Awards Committee (see page 15). These awards will be made on a case by case basis, and do not set a precedent for other awards.

### **Eligibility for support from the 19+ Hardship Fund**

To be eligible for help from the 19+ Hardship Fund students must be 19 or over on 31<sup>st</sup> August in the year they start their course. Students will also satisfy residency criteria and be enrolled on an appropriate course of study. More details about the fund can be found at

[Adult education budget \(AEB\) funding rules 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2021-to-2022)

19+ Hardship Funds cannot be paid to students eligible for Advanced Learning Loans, on Higher Education (HE) courses, waged Apprentices, or people in or released on temporary licence from custody. Any students who are unsure of their eligibility for support should contact Student Services.

## **The Process**

### **Application**

All individuals wishing to receive help from the 19+ Hardship Fund will need to apply online using the “19+ Application form for Financial Support for Adult Learners 2021-22” in which they will need to supply the following information:

- Student’s personal information, e.g. name, DOB, address etc.
- Name of Learning programme
- Proof of gross household income
- Details of assistance required
- Student declaration to confirm their understanding and agreement to observe terms and conditions

**The Evidence required to support the application is as follows:**

- Copy of Learning Agreement
- Tax Credit Award Notice for household for 2021-22, all pages
- P60
- 2 recent wage slips
- Any current benefits agency letter dated within the 3 months prior to the application
- Pension Credit Award Notice for current year
- Where the above documents are not available, Student Finance Team will agree on valid alternatives with the applicant on a case by case basis

This evidence to be uploaded to the Learner Hub, or emailed direct to the Student Finance Team.

### **Assessment**

Assessment and interviews (where appropriate) will be carried out by the Student Finance Team.

Level of support awarded will be determined by household income evidence.

### **20+ Childcare Support Funds**

- Students who need financial help with childcare costs and are aged under 20 at the start of their course should check whether they are eligible for help from the Care to Learn scheme.
- Students who need financial help with childcare costs and are eligible for the Advanced Learning Loan should check whether they are eligible for help from the Advanced Learning Loans Bursary Fund (LBF).
- Other adult students aged 20+ who need financial help with childcare costs may apply for 20+ Childcare Support Funds.

The ESFA provides College with the 20+ Childcare Support Funds to provide financial help to eligible students aged 20+. The Fund can help meet costs for Ofsted registered childcare for the children of students whilst they are studying. It is a means tested fund and the amount a student may receive depends on their family gross household income and the number of children requiring childcare. The fund provides support to students who are experiencing financial hardship. Awards from the fund are made to individual students on a discretionary basis but paid directly to childcare providers by the College.

The allocation of 20+ Childcare Support Funds to students will be dependent on beneficiaries meeting the College's attendance requirements of 90% over the College year. Students should note that these funds are limited, and awards from the fund will only be made where sufficient funds are available to do so. The College may refuse applications once the fund is exhausted.

Should a student cease to attend or is withdrawn from Bolton College at any point during the academic year, financial support for childcare will finish on the last date of recorded attendance. The responsibility for childcare costs reverts to the student from that date.

## **Priorities**

The income threshold for qualification for 20+ Childcare Support Funds has been set for 2021-22 at the following levels:

- Student (Single) - annual gross income less than or equal to £21,000
- Student (Living with Partner) – annual gross family income less than or equal to £25,000

## **Eligibility for support from the 20+ Childcare Funds**

To be eligible for help from the 20+ Childcare Fund students must be 20 or over at the start of their studies. Students will also satisfy residency criteria and be enrolled on an appropriate course of study. More details about the fund can be found at

[Adult education budget \(AEB\) funding rules 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2021-to-2022)

20+ Childcare Support Funds cannot be paid to students eligible for Advanced Learning Loans, on Higher Education (HE) courses, waged Apprentices, or people in or released on temporary licence from custody. Any students who are unsure of their eligibility for support should contact Student Services.

## **Type of Support**

Childcare Support can only be used for Ofsted registered Childcare. The College cannot meet the full costs of a student's childcare. The College requires students to contribute to these costs, as the College will only fund 80% of costs with a maximum contribution from the College of £45 per day. The College will not fund childcare costs during College holidays. College will pay its contribution of childcare costs directly to the childcare provider rather than the student. The College reserves the right to vary the percentage value of the contribution it makes, depending on the availability of funds.

## The Process

### Application

All students aged 20 or over wishing to receive help from Childcare Support Funds will need to apply using a "19+ Application form for Financial Support for Adult Learners 2021-22" in which they will need to supply the following information:

- Student's personal information, e.g. name, DOB, address etc.
- Learning programme
- Proof of gross household income
- Student declaration to confirm their understanding and agreement to observe terms and conditions
- The student finance team will send a separate form to be completed by the Childcare Provider giving provider's details e.g. Ofsted Registration Number, contact details, details of children to be cared for and sessions required as well as cost per session of childcare

The Evidence required to support the application is as follows:

- Tax Credit Award Notice for household for 2021-22, all pages
- P60
- 2 recent wage slips
- Any current benefits agency letter dated within the 3 months prior to the application
- Pension Credit Award Notice for current year
- Where the above documents are not available, Student Finance Team will agree on valid alternatives with the applicant on a case by case basis

### Assessment

Assessment and interviews (where appropriate) will be carried out by the Student Finance Officer and Student Finance Assistants.

Level of support awarded will be determined by household income evidence.

## **Advanced Learning Loans Bursary Fund (LBF)**

The SFA provides the College with the LBF to provide additional financial help to eligible students taking Level 3 and above qualifications (not HE courses). **Students must be aged 19+ who have had approved, and are in receipt of, the Advanced Learning Loan to meet their fee costs.** Students who have not applied for or have been refused an Advanced Learning Loan cannot access the LBF, nor are they eligible for help from 19+ Hardship or 20+ Childcare Funds.

The LBF can help meet costs such as Additional Learning Support Needs, Childcare, and Travel, and exceptionally Emergency Funds. It is a means tested fund and the amount a student may receive depends on their family gross household income. The fund provides support to students who are experiencing financial hardship. Awards from the fund are made to individual students on a discretionary basis. Any award is made subject to satisfactory attendance at college.

Students should note that this fund is limited, and awards from the fund will only be made where sufficient funds are available to do so. The College may refuse applications once the fund is exhausted.

### **Priorities**

Priority groups of students include:

- Students with learning difficulties or disabilities
- Those acting as carers for a family member or friend
- Those on probation
- Those in receipt of means tested benefits i.e. Income Support

### **Support Priority 1** – Additional Learning Support Element.

The Student Finance Team will liaise with the Learner Support Team to administer the funding to provide the support required.

There are no financial criteria attached to qualification for this assistance.

### **Support Priority 2** – Childcare Element

The income threshold for qualification for help with childcare costs from the LBF has been set for 2021-22 at the following levels:

- Student (Single) - annual gross income less than or equal to £21,000
- Student (Living with Partner) – annual gross family income less than or equal to £25,000

Students must be using an Ofsted registered childcare provider. The College cannot meet the full costs of a student's childcare. The College requires students to contribute to at least 20% of these costs and the College will fund the remaining 80% of costs. The College will not fund childcare costs during College holidays. College will pay childcare costs directly to the childcare provider rather than the student. The College reserves the right to vary the percentage value of the contribution it makes, depending on the availability of funds.

### Support Priority 3 – Travel Element

The income threshold for qualification for the Travel element of LBF has been set for 2020-21 at the following levels:

- Student (Single) – annual gross income less than or equal to £21,000
- Student (Living with Partner) – annual gross family income less than or equal to £25,000

This is to support students who meet the financial criteria, and who's journey from home to their College Campus is more than two kilometres (Google Maps and AA Route Planner used as the tools to assess distance). The College will be paying travel costs at a standard rate of £5.00 per day for students who travel solely within the Greater Manchester area. Students who travel from outside or who are disabled and cannot use public transport will be eligible for a higher rate of assistance. Payments will be made to students in six instalments, the first as soon as possible after the application is approved and each subsequent payment will be made at the start of each half term. This level of support is integral to removing barriers to attendance and retention.

The allocation of Travel Costs to students will be dependent on beneficiaries meeting the College's attendance requirements of 90% over the College year. The College reserves the right to review a student's entitlement where attendance drops below this figure.

Support Priority 4 – Food Support. This is to support students who meet the financial criteria. The College will be paying Food Support costs at a standard rate of £2.00 per day. Payments will be made to students in six instalments, the first as soon as possible after the application is approved and each subsequent payment will be made at the start of each half term. This level of support is integral to removing barriers to attendance and retention.

The continued payments of Food Support Costs to students will be dependent on beneficiaries meeting the College's attendance requirements of 90% over the College year. The College reserves the right to review a student's entitlement where attendance drops below this figure.

Support Priority 5 - Emergency Assistance. Where a student is suffering from severe financial hardship due to domestic emergency, financial assistance may be agreed on an exceptional basis by the College's Awards Committee. These awards will be made on a case by case basis, and do not set a precedent for other awards.

### **The Process**

#### Application

All individuals wishing to receive help from the LBF will need to apply using the online application form, in which they will need to supply the following information:

- Student's personal information, e.g. name, DOB, address etc.
- Name of Learning programme
- Details of any Learning Difficulty and/or Disability for Priority 1 students
- Proof of gross household income for Priority 2, 3, and 4 students
- Details of assistance required
- A tutor/learner support staff statement to confirm student enrolment and tutor/learner support staff's support of request
- Student declaration to confirm their understanding and agreement to observe terms and conditions

The Financial Evidence required to support applications for Priority 2, 3 and 4 is as follows:

- Tax Credit Award Notice for household for 2020-21, all pages
- Screenshot of Universal Credit being awarded, and the value of the award
- P60
- 2 recent wage slips
- Current benefits agency letter dated within the 3 months prior to the application
- Pension Credit Award Notice for current year
- Where the above documents are not available, Student Finance Team will agree on valid alternatives with the applicant on a case by case basis

Additional Evidence required

Before any assistance can be approved for any Priority, the student's application for an Advanced Learning Loan must have been approved by the Student Loans Company.

**Assessment**

Assessment and interviews (where appropriate) will be carried out by the Student Finance Team.

## **Monitoring & Management Arrangements for All Funds**

The Student Finance Officer and Assistants will maintain records of the following:

- Details of all applications
- Application outcome
- Payment schedule (where appropriate)
- Appeals documentation
- Other records e.g. copies of evidence provided by students, letters, interview notes

The Student Finance Team will maintain electronic records of all applications for funding and outcomes using:

- Spreadsheets
- Databases
- EBS
- Updates identified by ESFA

## **Policy Statement**

Bolton College will strive to:

- Do all it can so that no eligible student has to withdraw from their course due to lack of financial support \*
- Take steps to ensure that all eligible students can apply for financial help, thus supporting “widening participation” and the provision of learning for under-represented groups
- Ensure that any personal information provided in an application is subject to the Data Protection Act.
- Ensure that all applications for financial support are dealt with efficiently and fairly.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of its financial support for students on a regular basis.

**\* Bolton College is committed to do everything it can to support its students; however all sources of funding provided by ESFA are finite and therefore funding is limited and it cannot be guaranteed.**

## **Appeals Procedure:**

Should a student wish to appeal against the outcome of an application or a decision made regarding any of the funding streams outlined, he/ she should put the appeal in writing within ten working days of the decision to the address below. The Appeal will be considered by the College’s Award’s Committee within the next ten working days and the student will be notified of the outcome within three working days of the Panel decision.

*College Awards Committee, Student Services, Bolton College, Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5BG*

## **MEMBERSHIP OF PANELS & TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Financial Support Funding Panel**

#### **Membership:**

Senior Management Team (for policy overview)  
Student Finance Officer  
Student Services Manager

#### **Term of Reference**

1. To agree and confirm the criteria and formula for Student Financial Support Policy
2. To formulate the college policy and procedure for distributing the funds available
3. To review and amend the college's policy in-year to ensure that the best use is made of available funds

### **College Awards Committee**

#### **Membership:**

Director with responsibility for Student Services  
Finance Team Senior Member of Staff  
Student Services Manager

#### **Terms of Reference**

1. To hear any appeals and to rule on the appropriateness of the original award decision, confirming or amending as appropriate
2. To communicate the outcome of the appeal to the appellant and to the Student Finance Officer

The decision of the Panel is final and binding.

### **Complaints Policy & Procedure**

There are a number of informal channels you can follow which we expect would usually lead to a resolution if you have an issue you wish to raise at the time. This can be done by:-

- Speaking to a tutor, manager or member of staff who represents the department of the college about which you have an issue or concern
- Speaking to a Curriculum Leader, or Head of Programme Area
- Discussing with Student Services
- Email your suggestions for improvement to our Customer Services Manager at:-  
customer.services@boltoncc.ac.uk

However, if you feel it is necessary to pursue a complaint formally, you can be assured that we will treat it seriously and impartially.

A formal complaint should be made in the following way:-

Initially you should speak with a tutor, Curriculum Leader, or Head of Area for your Department and discuss your concerns with them. You may find that the matter can be resolved at this stage.

However, if that is not the case you should then:-

- Complete our online complaint form:-  
<http://www.boltoncc.ac.uk/pub/complaint.php>
- Visit Student Services or the Principalship office for assistance and to complete a complaint form digitally