



Student Funding Policy

POLICY / DOCUMENT PURPOSE STATEMENT

To provide financial assistance and guidance to eligible students enrolled on programmes funded by the ESFA. This process will be transparent and based on Government assessment criteria which ensures access to, and participation in, adult learning.

APPLICATION

This policy outlines the guidance and implementation of student financial support. This policy and its underpinning guidance should be read by all students, staff and governors.

INTERPRETATION

Further guidance on the use or interpretation of this policy may be obtained from the Curriculum Manager.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES / DOCUMENTS

WMCA Financial Support Procedure 2025/26

Childcare Support Procedure 2025/26

Admissions Policy

Financial Regulations

Version number	5
Owner / Area	Curriculum Manager
Date of implementation	8/24
Review date	8/27
Ratified / Authorised by	

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the allocation and distribution of financial assistance and supporting guidance to eligible students on WMCA (West Midlands Combined Authority), EFSA (Education & Skills Funding Agency) funded courses or students in receipt of a SFE (Student Finance England) Loan Bursary. Fircroft College is committed to supporting lifelong adult learning using funds where appropriate to remove barriers to education for those in financial hardship.

2. Aims

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

3. Policy

- 3.1. All Fircroft College financial support will be assessed within the following categories; hardship, childcare and residential access. Three sets of procedures link to this policy and outline the detailed financial support available – the Adult Education Budget (AEB), Advanced Learner Loan and the Childcare Financial Support Procedures.
- 3.2. The College may make discretionary payments in exceptional circumstances. This must be approved by a member of the college management team.

Eligibility

- 3.3. To be eligible for financial support students must be:
 - 3.3.1. enrolled onto an approved learning aim/qualification/course funded by either the WMCA, the ESFA or be in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan from Student Finance England;
 - 3.3.2. Where learners are intending to be funded via the WMCA AEB funding allocation, must reside at a WMCA address.
 - 3.3.3. where applicants are on an WMCA funded programme they must satisfy the appropriate criteria for hardship within the threshold of a income of up to £34,194 PA.

Home Status

- 3.4. Students must meet the residency requirements for a 'Home' student, therefore are:
- 3.4.1. a citizen of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or have settled status or Rights of Abode in the UK;
 - 3.4.2. a student who has been ordinarily resident in EEA or countries determined within EEA for at least 3 years on the first day of learning;
 - 3.4.3. a non-EEA citizen who has UK government permission to live in the UK, which is not for educational purposes, and have been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least 3 years before the start of learning;
 - 3.4.4. a student with refugee status, exceptional or discretionary leave to enter or remain, humanitarian protection, leave outside the rules, Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016, 'Calais Leave' to remain or the husband, partner or child of the previous;
 - 3.4.5. an asylum seeker within the funding guidance rule of claims;
 - 3.4.6. a member of the armed forces.

Responsibility

- 3.5. 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.
- 3.6. 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.
- 3.7. 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 and diversity.
- 3.8. The College will ensure that the student is enrolled on to programme within their first day of attendance or before and that all enrolment documentation is signed and checked in line with funding guidance.
- 3.9. 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.

- 3.10. The Welfare Coordinator will administer funds in accordance with funding guidelines as determined by the relevant funding agencies, and financial audit requirements.
- 3.11. Where a student receives child care funding it is the responsibility of the student to maintain the contract with the childcare provider and any subsequent financial payments.
- 3.12. The Curriculum Manager is responsible for ensuring student funding policies are adhered to.
- 3.13. The Operations Committee is responsible for the approval of this policy and its review.
- 3.14. An Assistant Principal and Head of Finance are responsible for the consideration of complaints and appeals with regards to financial support.

Monitoring, Review and Dissemination

- 3.15. The policy and administration procedures will be reviewed annually in line with:
 - 3.15.1. WMCA and ESFA AEB guidelines and audit requirements;
 - 3.15.2. Annual budget, mid-year funding forecast and financial outturn;
 - 3.15.3. College strategic priorities and curriculum plan;
 - 3.15.4. Student feedback;
 - 3.15.5. Operations Committee approval.
- 3.16. The College will ensure that accurate records are retained to evidence students' financial eligibility, including application and enrolment alongside individual allocations and payments.
- 3.17. Adherence to this policy will be monitored through the internal audit process conducted by the Colleges Internal Audit Service.
- 3.18. Information on financial support will be disseminated via the following:
 - 3.18.1. Student enrolment and induction sessions;
 - 3.18.2. Staff induction and training events;

3.18.3. Open days and IAG, interviews and enrolment;

3.18.4. The College website/social media;

3.18.5. Student Progress Meetings.

3.19. This policy and its underpinning procedures will be located on the College SharePoint site and the College website.

Appeals and complaints

3.20. Student Service will make available details of the appeals procedure where appropriate. Only appeals relating to process will be considered.

3.21. All complaints will follow the College complaints procedure.

Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR (General Data Protection Rules)

3.22. Fircroft College is a data controller in terms of the Data Protection Act and GDPR. Personal information and any supporting evidence will be used by the College for audit purposes. The College has responsibility to administer public funds (financial support) in a 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.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

3.23. Fircroft 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.