

30. ADULT EDUCATION BURSARIES

What is the Adult Education Bursary Scheme?

In the United Kingdom there are six colleges that specialise in providing long-term residential courses for adults. The bursary scheme has been set up for adults who enrol on a full-time course of at least a year in length at one of these colleges.

Grants are given to students to cover tuition fees and to provide a suitable amount of money on which to live for the year. Also a dependants' allowance is given for those who need extra financial support. Additional grants are available for students with disabilities.

Where are these colleges?

The location and contact details for these colleges are provided below:

Coleg Harlech Harlech Gwnedd LL46 2PU Tel. 01766 780 363 info@harlech.ac.uk www.harlech.ac.uk	Newbattle Abbey College Dalkeith Midlothian EH22 3LL Tel. 0131 633 1921 office@newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk www.newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk
Ruskin College Walton Street Oxford OX1 2HE Tel. 01865 554 331 enquiries@ruskin.ac.uk www.ruskin.ac.uk	Northern College Wentworth Castle Stainborough Barnsley South Yorkshire S75 3ET Tel. 01226 776 000 courses@northern.ac.uk www.northern.ac.uk
Fircroft College 1018 Bristol Road Selly Oak Birmingham B29 6LH Tel. 01214 720 116 www.fircroft.ac.uk	Hillcroft College (for women) South Bank Surbiton Surrey KT6 6DF Tel. 020 8399 2688 enquiry@hillcroft.ac.uk www.hillcroft.ac.uk

What can I study at these colleges?

The colleges offer university type education for adults in a supportive environment within areas such as the humanities and social sciences. Examples of subjects that can be studied include local history, politics, sociology, English literature, media studies, art and design and information technology.

What types of qualification are funded through this scheme?

The bursaries are available to students attending certificate and diploma courses. They are not available for students who are studying on a course that leads to a professional qualification or for students who are studying on courses at first degree level. Other funding is available for this type of course (see Section 2 of this book for more information about funding for higher education courses).

What are other students like at these colleges?

These colleges have been established to provide education for students who, for economic or other reasons, did not have the opportunity to continue in education after leaving school. Students are drawn from a wide range of occupations and backgrounds; ages vary enormously and both genders are represented (with the exception of Hillcroft, which is a college for women only). Students attending these colleges find that they are able to make lasting friendships with like-minded people.

What are the eligibility criteria for funding?

To be eligible to apply for funding you need to meet the following criteria:

- You must be at least 19 years old before the start of the academic year in which the course begins. Some colleges may request a higher age limit so you will need to check before you apply.
- You must be resident in England or Wales. Scottish students can apply for other types of funding, so contact your residential college for further details. More information for Scottish students is provided in Chapters 5, 6 and 10.
- You must have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man throughout the period of three years immediately preceding your bursary application. During this period you must not have been resident solely for the purposes of receiving full-time education.
- You must have settled status which means that you must be settled in the United Kingdom within the meaning of the Immigration Act of 1971 at the date you apply for a bursary.
- You must have been offered a place at one of the colleges listed above and been recommended for a bursary.
- You should not have received an Adult Education Bursary on a previous occasion.
- You should not have attended a course at a UK higher education institution and received public funding to do this on a previous occasion. If you had to leave this course for a compelling reason, this fact may be taken into account when your eligibility for a bursary is assessed.

Certain exemptions apply and if you are in doubt you should seek advice from your chosen college or from the Awards Officer (details below). If you are an EU national or the child of an EU national, you may be able to receive help with your tuition fees, so contact your chosen college for more information.

How much funding is available?

All students who receive a bursary will have their tuition fees, examination fees and subscription to the students' union paid for them. This is irrespective of your family income. All of these fees are paid straight to the college on your behalf.

The personal maintenance grant is means tested, so how much you will receive depends on your family income. It is paid to the college at the start of term and usually distributed to students in the autumn, spring and summer terms. The standard rate of personal maintenance grant for full-time attendance of 30 weeks plus the vacations at Christmas and Easter in 2009/10 is as follows:

- students living in college in the London area: £4,660
- students living in college elsewhere: £3,675
- students living in the family home: £2,780

If normal term-time exceeds 30 weeks an additional weekly rate may be paid:

- students living in college in the London area: £96
- students living in college elsewhere: £74
- students living in the family home: £44

How is my income assessed?

The amount of maintenance grant you will receive depends on your family income. This could include your own income, that of your partner or spouse, or that of your parents.

Students who are not considered to have independent status will have their parental income taken into account and parents may be expected to make a contribution towards your maintenance. In general, if you are under the age of 25 and you've not been married, or supported yourself financially for at least three years prior to taking up your course, you may be considered to be dependent on your parents. Further information about your independent status is provided in Chapter 8.

When assessing your income the Awards Officer works out the residual income by taking your gross income before tax and National Insurance and taking off allowances for personal pension scheme payments and child dependants.

If your household income is less than £23,085 you will receive a full grant. If you are a single, independent student you will receive a full grant if your income is less than £10,750 a year. Above these amounts you (or your parents) will make a contribution of £45 plus £1 for every £9.50 over these income levels.

Are there any other grants available?

Other funding may be available for students in certain circumstances. These are listed in the table below. The figures relate to 2009/10.

TYPE OF FUND	AMOUNT OF FUNDING
Childcare Grant	£148.75 a week for one child £255 a week for two or more children
Parents' Learning Allowance	Up to £1,470
Child Tax Credit	Variable - see Chapter 41
Adult Dependants' Grant	Up to £2,575
Travelling Expenses	Variable
Disabled Students' Allowances	Up to £5,030 specialist equipment grant Up to £20,000 non-medical personal helper allowance Up to £1,680 general disabled student allowance See Chapter 14 for more information
Learner Support Fund	Variable - depends on needs and funds
Benefits for students from vulnerable groups	Various - see Chapter 41

How do I apply for funding?

Apply to your preferred college. Once you have been offered a place they will provide you with an application form. Complete the form and return it to the college who will forward it to the Awards Officer.

If your application is approved, the Awards Officer will write to you confirming this and will send you a further form to complete. This is called a *statement of financial circumstances* and enables the Awards Officer to assess how much grant you should receive.

Once your grant has been assessed you will be sent a *Notification of Bursary* which shows you how much you will be paid and when instalments are due. You may need to provide additional information if requested.

If your application is not successful the Awards Officer will contact you to explain why. You have the right to appeal if you think the decision is wrong. Applications should be made as soon as possible to avoid a delay in payments.

Where can I find more information?

If you are interested in studying at one of these colleges and need to find out about the bursary scheme, you are advised to contact the college in which you are interested. A booklet called *Adult Education Bursaries: a guide for applicants for courses at the long-term residential colleges* is available from the address below:

Awards Officer
Adult Education Bursaries
c/o Ruskin College
Walton Street
Oxford OX1 2HE
Tel. **01865 556 360**
e-mail: awards@ruskin.ac.uk