

10. OBTAINING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR FURTHER EDUCATION

What funding is available for further education students?

There are several types of funding available if you wish to continue into further education after you have finished your compulsory schooling. However, you should note that these schemes may not be offered in all parts of the United Kingdom and the administration and eligibility criteria can vary. Contact your LA (England and Wales), ELB (Northern Ireland) or SAAS (Scotland) for more information.

- **Tuition fees/course fees (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)** - most students between the ages of 16 and 19 studying at school sixth forms or further education colleges will not have to pay tuition fees or course fees. However, you may be required to pay a registration/enrolment fee and examination fee.
- **Fee Waiver Policy (Scotland)** - under this policy most full-time students studying below HNC/D level at FE Colleges in Scotland will receive free tuition if they meet the residence criteria. If you intend to study part-time, you may have your fees paid for you. However, this will depend on your family income or whether you are in receipt of certain benefits. Applications for fee waivers are made through your college.
- **Discretionary Support Funds** - these are available for students studying at further education colleges who are in severe financial need. The funds are administered by colleges and are given usually as one-off grants when you are experiencing severe financial hardship. Evidence of your income will be required when you apply and some colleges will offer funds only to individuals on income-related benefits or with low incomes. The funds can be used for childcare, travel costs, course and exam fees, books, equipment and costs of field trips. There is no automatic entitlement to help from this fund: each applicant is judged individually and funds are not guaranteed.
- **The Education Maintenance Allowance** - through this scheme a weekly payment of £30 and periodic bonuses are paid to young people aged 16 – 18 from low income households to encourage them to stay on at school or college. Visit <http://ema.direct.gov.uk> for more information.
- **Bursary (Scotland)** - means-tested discretionary bursaries are available to help with the living costs of students from low income families. The amount of bursary depends on your family income and you have to meet certain rules to be eligible. Awards are discretionary and you should speak to your college *Bursary Officer* to find out whether you are eligible.
- **Residential Allowances** – in England you can apply for help with your residential costs if you decide to study on a specialist course that is not available at a college close to your home. There are two schemes available: the Residential Bursary Scheme and the Residential Support Scheme. Visit <http://moneytolearn.direct.gov.uk/residentialbursary> for more information.
- **Transport Costs** - help with transport costs is available for students aged 16 – 19. Contact your LA (England and Wales), ELB (Northern Ireland) or SAAS (Scotland) for more information.

- **Help for students with disabilities and special needs** - there are a variety of schemes available if you have a disability and/or special needs (see Chapter 28). Some bus companies offer free travel and some LAs arrange free transport.
- **Assembly Learning Grant (Wales)** - you can apply for this grant if you live in Wales and are on a low income. You must be following a post compulsory education course of least 275 hours a year which leads to a nationally recognised qualification. Applications are made through your LA.
- **Individual Learning Accounts (Scotland)** - if you live in Scotland, are aged 16 or over and earn less than £22,000 a year you may qualify for an Individual Learning Account (ILA) of up to £500 a year. Visit www.ilascotland.org.uk for more information.
- **Individual Learning Accounts (Wales)** - these are available in Wales and provide a sum of money to help you with the cost of learning. The scheme is available if you are aged 18 or over and you or your partner are claiming income-related benefits or you do not have any qualifications above Level 2. Visit www.ila-wales.org.uk for more information.
- **Level 2 Entitlement** - if you intend to study on a course at Level 2 or equivalent you may be able to receive free tuition. This is available for people over the age of 19 who do not already have Level 2 qualifications or above. In some circumstances free tuition may be available for courses at Level 3. There is no upper age limit for this scheme and no restriction on length of course or mode of study. However, not all courses and qualifications at this level are included in the scheme, so you should contact the college in which you are interested for more information. Also, you may be required to pay registration and examination fees, so find out about these additional costs before you enrol. You will not qualify for this scheme if you have any of the following qualifications:
 - 5 GCSEs grade A – C;
 - 5 O levels;
 - 2 AS levels/ 1 A level;
 - 5 CSEs grade 1;
 - NVQ level 2;
 - EDEXCEL or BTEC First Diploma;
 - OCR/RSA Diploma;
 - GNVQ Intermediate;
 - City & Guilds Part 2 qualification.
- **The Adult Learning Grant (England)** - you can receive a weekly grant through this scheme to help with the cost of your learning if you are over the age of 19 and if you have a low income. Visit www.direct.gov.uk and enter 'adult learning grant' into the search box for more information.
- **FE Childcare Support Fund** – this is available for students with dependent children studying within the further education sector. Through this fund places in the college nursery are offered at a subsidised rate or financial help is offered for other registered or approved childcare. In general, funds will be allocated to those in most need, usually from low income households who are facing financial hardship. People who have little or no formal qualifications may also take priority when funds are allocated. You should look into the availability of childcare funds before enrolling as this fund is limited.

How much money can I expect to receive?

Funding levels for the academic year 2009/10 are as follows:

TYPE OF SCHEME	AMOUNT OF FUNDING
Discretionary Support Funds	Discretionary – amounts vary depending on individual circumstances
The Education Maintenance Allowance	Up to £30 per week during term £100 periodic bonus payments
Bursary (Scotland)	Up to £86.81 a week
Specialist residential colleges	Up to £4,079 (London) Up to £3,458 (elsewhere)
Transport costs	Various – depends on income and travel costs
Disabilities and special needs	Various – usually includes free travel
Assembly Learning Grant	Up to £1500 a year
Individual Learning Accounts (Scotland)	Up to £500 per year
Individual Learning Accounts (Wales)	Up to £200 per year
Level 2 Entitlement (England)	Free tuition
The Adult Learning Grant (England)	Up to £30 a week, depending on income
FE Childcare Support Fund	Various – depends on needs and available funds

How do I apply for funding?

Teachers at your school can request information and application forms for all schemes administered by your LA, ELB or SAAS so check first whether this information is available from your school. Alternatively, you can contact the *student support* section of your LA, ELB or SAAS for more information and application forms.

Transport passes should be applied for during the summer vacation prior to taking up the course.

You can apply for Discretionary Support Funds at any time of the year once you have started your course. You should contact the *student support officer* at your college for more information and to obtain an application form.

When you apply you will need to complete the relevant application form and send verification from your school/college that you are enrolled on a course and take up the place offered. Guidance notes are provided with the forms. For most schemes you will need to demonstrate a suitable level of academic performance and make sure that you attend your course. Some schemes pay extra money if you have full attendance.

Where can I find more information?

As schemes may vary between LAs you are advised to contact your LA for specific information about the funds available in your area.

Connexions provides advice, guidance, support and personal development services for all 13-19 year olds. If you have any query about financial support while studying, a personal adviser in your local *Connexions* centre should be able to help. The address and telephone number can be found in your local telephone directory or you can visit www.connexions.gov.uk for more information.

For more information about registered or approved childcare in your area visit <http://childcarefinder.direct.gov.uk/childcarefinder>.

Information for English students:

More information about all aspects of funding for further education can be obtained from <http://moneytolearn.direct.gov.uk>. Visit <http://careersadvice.direct.gov.uk> for useful information about all aspects of jobs, careers and learning, including information about sources of funding that may be available to you. You can use the tools on this site to assess your skills and interests and help you to produce a CV when you start to look for work.

Information for Welsh students:

If you live in Wales you can obtain more information about funding for courses from www.elwa.ac.uk and www.careerswales.com. More information about the ILA in Wales can be obtained from www.ilawales.co.uk.

Information for Scottish students:

The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) website contains more information about funding for further education courses: www.saas.gov.uk. Learndirect Scotland can offer advice to students about all aspects of learning and funding: www.learndirectscotland.com or freephone telephone **0808 100 9000**. Visit www.careers-scotland.org.uk for comprehensive information about education and employment, including funding opportunities, choosing a career, producing a CV and attending interviews.

Information for students from Northern Ireland:

More information about student finance in Northern Ireland can be obtained from www.education-support.org.uk. This is the web portal for the five Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland. Visit www.careersserviceni.com for advice and guidance on learning, training and employment opportunities in Northern Ireland.