

# FE Learner Bursaries and Financial Support Policy 2023-2025

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Burton & South Derbyshire College's commitment to Equality and Diversity means that this policy has been screened in relation to the use of gender neutral language, jargon free plain English, recognition of the needs of disabled people, promotion of the positive duty in relation to race and disability and avoidance of stereotypes. This document is available in alternative formats on request

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## SUMMARY OF CHANGES FROM 2022/23

2.3.1	Amendment of wording to be inclusive of the Finance Coordinators role in the financial support process, alongside other relevant managers within the Learner Services Team.
2.3.9	Amendment of wording to declare the Finance Coordinator responsible for dealing with complaints and appeals, escalating these where necessary to the Head of Services for Learners and Customer Experience.
4.1.5	Amendment of household income threshold based on a full-time employee, working 37 hours a week, earning minimum wage (£10.42 as of April'23) and an additional income representing a minimum of 15 hours per week, earning minimum wage (£10.42 as of April'23). This equate to £20,048.08 + £8,127.60 = £28,175.68.
4.1.5	Amendment of personal income threshold to represent a full-time employee, earning minimum wage (rate of £10.42 as of April'23).
4.1.9	Amendment of wording to align with 2023-24 ESFA 16-19 Bursary guidelines.
4.2.12	Learners who live further than 1.5 miles from the college will be eligible for travel support, those who live less than 1.5 miles from College will be considered based on their individual circumstances.
4.2.13	Amendment to the provision of a bus pass – tickets will be provided to learners for the number of days they are in College every fortnight.
4.2.14	Learners travelling using the Trent Barton Bus Service will receive a monthly top up, capped at £70, via their Mango Travel App. If a learner is unable to download this app to their mobile device, a monthly BACS payment will be arranged.
4.2.15	Train fare will be capped at a £350 contribution per term and will be based on an individual's travel costs when they apply.
4.2.18	Bus passes will be purchased for high needs learners, or under exceptional circumstances only.
4.2.32	The College will not fund external childcare, and learners will need to use the College Nursery provision. Exceptions of the above will be reviewed by the Finance Coordinator when an award is made.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Burton and South Derbyshire College (BSDC) is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and widening participation through access to timely and appropriate financial support. This Learner Bursaries and Financial Support Policy underpins our commitment to ensuring that all applicants in financial hardship have an informative and positive experience to guide them and support them to identify and secure learner support funds, in order to remove barriers to participation and help attain their learning potential.
- 1.2 Burton and South Derbyshire College (BSDC) receives an annual allocation of learner support funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Student Finance England (SFE) and the Office for Students (OFS) which are targeted to support eligible learners to help toward the costs of participating in education.

## 2.0 Service Delivery

### 2.1 Principles

- 2.1.1 The College aims to provide information, advice and guidance to applicants who are experiencing financial hardship or are impacted by unforeseen circumstances resulting in financial hardship in order to identify and apply for bursaries which will help to significantly alleviate or remove the barriers to their participation in education.
- 2.1.2 All staff and applicants have access to, and are required to comply with, the College's policies and procedures as well as published Government guidelines.
- 2.1.3 Staff involved in the administration and management of learner support funds who give guidance to applicants and/or undertake related duties, will be knowledgeable and competent in their roles. They will operate to clear guidance and be supported by appropriate staff development.
- 2.1.4 The College will have an appropriate and transparent framework to administer, monitor and record spending within the context of financial support.
- 2.1.5 The eligibility criteria by which applicants are assessed will be fair, clear, explicit, open and consistently applied.
- 2.1.6 Funds are allocated annually and is a specific and limited amount of money which the College administers.
- 2.1.7 All awards are discretionary and are not guaranteed.
- 2.1.8 The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the College is in receipt of all information on household income or benefit entitlements required to allow the institution to make a decision on their application and that all information is accurate. Omission of relevant information, or the supply of inaccurate information, may invalidate the application or the offer of support. If the College identifies such inaccuracies after an award has been made, your support will be withdrawn.
- 2.1.9 Information will be collected and used only in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.
- 2.1.10 All financial support procedures will be regularly monitored for their effectiveness for all categories of applicants.

## 2.2 Guidance, Policies and Procedures

- 2.2.1 In order to implement its principles, the College will regularly review, update and publish annual guidance, procedures and policies including:
- Application and eligibility criteria via the [Financial Support](#) section of the College website.
  - Fees, charges and financial support policies for [Further Education](#) and [Higher Education](#) provision.
- 2.2.2 The Learner Bursaries and Financial Support Policy should be read in conjunction with other College publications as listed below:
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
  - [Feedback \(Compliments and Complaints\) Policy](#)
- 2.2.3 All College [student policies, procedures and guidance](#) are published on the College's website and are available on request in hard copy form.

## 2.3 Responsibilities

- 2.3.1 The College financial support service and processes are managed by the Finance Coordinator, supported by the Head of Services for Learners and Customer Experience, alongside other managers within the Learner Services Team
- 2.3.2 The financial support processes are fully embedded across the wider Customer Experience and Learner Services Teams to ensure positive collaboration across a range of additional support services to deliver a holistic service to applicants.
- 2.3.3 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.
- 2.3.4 The Financial Support Coordinator will administer funds in accordance with funding guidelines as determined by the relevant funding agencies, and financial audit requirements.
- 2.3.5 The College will ensure that accurate records are retained to evidence learners' financial eligibility, including application alongside individual allocations and payments.
- 2.3.6 Where a learner has made a self-declaration in relation to their financial status, it is the responsibility of the learner to inform the Department of Work and Pension of any income allowances through Financial Support.
- 2.3.7 It is the responsibility of the learner to ensure that they have a personal current bank account through which BACS payments can be made.
- 2.3.8 Where a learner receives childcare funding it is the responsibility of the learner to maintain the contract with the childcare provider and any subsequent financial payments.
- 2.3.9 The Finance Coordinator, supported by the Head of Services for Learners and Customer Experience, are responsible for the consideration of complaints and appeals with regards to financial support, escalating these where necessary.
- 2.3.10 Head of Services for Learners and Customer Experience, Learner Services Team Leader, Financial Support Coordinator and or Learner Services Advisor(s) are responsible for completing assessments as necessary.

## 2.4 Quality Assurance

### 2.4.1 Internal continual quality improvement

- 2.4.1.1 We believe that the views of our service users are the most important and useful tools for measuring satisfaction and driving improvements therefore feedback is integral to the process. Feedback is collected through College learner voice and College surveys.
- 2.4.1.2 The learner bursaries and financial support policy is additionally monitored through internal audits, annual self-assessment reports and regular reporting of performance data to the College Management Team and Senior Leadership Team.

## 2.4.2 External quality mark accreditation

2.4.2.1 The College holds the Matrix Quality Standard Accreditation for Learner Services and Customer Experience which was last reaccredited in May 2020. The financial support team as an integral part of the Learner Services Team is fully committed to continual quality improvements. This 3-year accreditation will be monitored annually internally and by the external quality mark organisation (The Growth Company). The financial support team will continue to embed and focus on the following four key elements as part of the internal monitoring and review processes:

- a. Leadership & Management
- b. Resources
- c. Service Delivery
- d. Continuous Quality Improvement

## 3.0 Information, Advice and Guidance

3.1 The College will provide applicants with accurate, clear, relevant and accessible information and clear guidance to enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options for support. This will be achieved by:

- a. Providing access to free information and advice from suitably qualified members of staff to applicants.
- b. Providing specific financial support information and answers to frequently asked questions via the College website.
- c. Responding to applicants' requests for advice made by telephone, email on social media or in person.

## 4.0 Administration

4.1 The College is committed to ensuring that the application and assessment processes are transparent and are followed fairly, courteously, consistently and promptly; Information concerning applicants will be treated as confidential in line with the College's Data Protection Policy and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules.

4.2 The College will ensure all financial support decisions are made by those equipped to make the required judgements.

4.3 Applications must be completed and assessed before any awards can be made from the support funds.

4.4 Up-to-date, valid, supporting information must be produced at the time of application. Staff administering the fund will verify the information given on the application form, or ask for further information if that provided is deemed not sufficient at the time of application.

4.5 The College asks that all applications should be submitted by the last Friday in April which falls within the current academic year. The College will maintain a contingency fund to support learners who join the College after this date.

4.6 The financial award will be communicated to the applicant once their application has been successfully assessed.

4.7 During Peak Enrolment (August, September and October): we endeavour to complete all assessments within 10-15 working days from the date of application acceptance (the date at which the application and all supporting information has been received). At all other times we endeavour to complete all assessments within 3-5 working days from the date of application acceptance.

## 4.1 Eligibility

- 4.1.1 To be eligible for financial support learners must be enrolled onto an approved learning aim/qualification/course funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or be in receipt of funding from Student Finance England (Advanced Learner Loans Bursary and HE Hardship Funds only).
- 4.1.2 Applicants must meet the residency requirements for a 'Home' learner, therefore are (a) a citizen of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or have settled status or Rights of Abode in the UK; (b) 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; (c) 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; (d) 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; (e) an asylum seeker within the funding guidance rule of claims; (f) a member of the armed forces.
- 4.1.3 Applicants will not be eligible if they are (a) individuals enrolled on a waged apprenticeship or Community Learning course; (b) individuals who do not meet the requirements of a 'Home' learner; (c) asylum seekers who have been refused asylum with no support granted under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1998; (d) individuals who are in prison or a young offender institution [YOI] or who have been released on temporary license (ROTL) i.e. day release; (e) individuals in receipt of funding for travel and/ or expenses from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 4.1.4 Where applicants are applying for the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary, a loan application must have been approved before they can access learner support funds.
- 4.1.5 Where applicants are on an ESFA funded programme they must satisfy the appropriate criteria for hardship within the threshold of a household gross taxable employment income of up to £28,175.68<sup>\*fn1</sup> (or with a personal employment income of less than £20,048.08<sup>\*fn2</sup>) or demonstrate they are in receipt of, or residing with parents or carers, who are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits (a) Income Support; (b) Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA); (c) Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA); (d) Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; (e) The guarantee element of State Pension Credit; (f) Child Tax Credit with no Working Tax Credit entitlement; (g) Child Tax and Working Tax Credit where the combined sum of the household employment income and working tax credits does not exceed £31,400.00; (h) Universal Credit; (i) Housing Benefit.
- 4.1.6 The College may choose to use its discretion where the household income exceeds this threshold when exceptional circumstances can be evidenced which demonstrate a legitimate financial need. This may include, but not limited to, notice/evidence of (a) unforeseen changes to income and expenses; (b) mortgage and or rent arrears; (c) Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVA), Debt Management Plan (DMP) or bankruptcy; (d) eviction or repossession of goods; (e) disconnection of utility services; (f) legal action in court is pending, County Court Judgement (CCJ) or High Court Writ; (g) medical debts due to the inability of family member to work due to illness.
- 4.1.7 Learners aged 19 to 25yrs who have a current and valid Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) are eligible to apply for support. Verification and validity of an applicant's EHCP will be sought from the Additional Learning Support team as part of the application assessment and award process. The applicant must also satisfy the conditions outlined in section 4.1.5.

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**fn1** – calculated by adding the wage of a full-time employee, working 37 hours a week, earning minimum wage (£10.42 as of April'23) and an additional income representing a minimum of 15 hours per week, earning minimum wage (£10.42 as of April'23). This equate to £20,048.08 + £8,127.60 = £28,175.68

**fn2** – calculated as a full-time employee, earning minimum wage (£10.42 as of April'23)

- 4.1.8 Applicants who are (a) in the care<sup>\*fn4</sup> of the Local Authority; (b) care leavers<sup>\*\*fn5</sup>; (c) receiving Income Support (IS), or Universal Credit (UC) 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; (d) receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right will be eligible for additional support from the ESFA Vulnerable Bursary.

## 4.2 Support Conditions

### Vulnerable Bursary

- 4.2.1 Learners will be awarded the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the types of costs they have to ensure they only receive the amount they actually need to participate and the College shall not automatically award learners £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.
- 4.2.2 Where the learner's costs exceed the full value of the vulnerable bursary the College may use the Discretionary Bursary to top-up any award to meet such additional costs.

### Equipment, Materials and/or Work Wear/Uniform

- 4.2.3 Learner support funds may be awarded to assist with the cost of purchasing equipment, materials and or uniform/work wear where required to enhance a learner's access to learning or to increase levels of achievement. Wherever possible the College will purchase and provide: kit, uniform, or specialist equipment on the learner's behalf and funds will be made payable directly to the equipment or uniform providers. Assessment of the level of support needed for each programme of study will be carried out in conjunction with information supplied by curriculum teams regarding course related costs.
- 4.2.4 Financial reimbursement of equipment, materials and or uniform/work wear will only be considered for items purchased from College approved suppliers and where satisfactory evidence of purchase accompanies the application. Applicants are advised to check with the College before committing to any purchase to ensure that they will be eligible for reimbursement.
- 4.2.5 All items purchased with support funds remain the property of the College, unless by separate agreement, and must be returned when learners leave the College.
- 4.2.6 Applicants who are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan are unable to apply for financial support with kit and or uniform.

### Professional Memberships

- 4.2.7 Learner support funds may be awarded to assist with the cost of professional membership where they are linked to the learners learning.
- 4.2.8 Applicants who are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan are unable to apply for financial support with professional membership fees.

### Trip and Visits

- 4.2.9 Learner support funds may be awarded to assist with the cost of trips and visits where they are linked to the learners learning. Extra-curricular trips and visits which are not linked to the programme will not be considered.
- 4.2.10 Applicants who are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan are unable to apply for financial support with trip or visit fees.

### Travel to and from College

- 4.2.11 Learner support funds will be administered in conjunction with Local Authority Transport Scheme's and Policies. In many cases, learner support funds will be used to provide additional financial support where transport costs are not met in full or present a barrier to learning.
- 4.2.12 Learners who live further than 1.5 miles from the college will be eligible for travel support, those who live less than 1.5 miles from College will be considered based on their individual circumstances.

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**fn4 – in care:** Children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'. A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as looked after. They are in a defined vulnerable group ('in care') and eligible for help from the bursary for vulnerable groups, where they need financial support to participate.

**fn5 – care leaver:** a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to



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13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

- 4.2.13 Learners travelling by Diamond or Arriva bus services will receive a fortnightly ticket allowance, providing them with the amount of tickets they need in order to get into College for those 2 weeks.
- 4.2.14 Learners travelling using the Trent Barton Bus Service will receive a monthly top up, capped at £70, via their Mango Travel App. If a learner is unable to download this app to their mobile device, a monthly BACS payment will be arranged.
- 4.2.15 Learners travelling by any other mode of public transport will receive a monetary contribution towards their travel costs for each timetabled day in College, for example the maximum termly allowance for train travel will be £350.00.
- 4.2.16 Learners opting to travel car, moped or motorcycle will receive travel payments which will be calculated based on a rate per mile or part thereof for each timetabled day. The rate to be applied will be 40p/per mile or part thereof.
- 4.2.17 Financial contributions will be offered towards; private vehicle hire and taxi's under exceptional circumstances. Support for parking charges, car insurance or road tax is not available.
- 4.2.18 Bus passes will be purchased for high needs learners, or under exceptional circumstances only.
- 4.2.19 Applicants may also be invited to apply for the provision of a bicycle, lights and a helmet. This provision will replace all alternative means of transportation for the duration of a learner's time at College. It will remain the responsibility of the Learner to maintain the cycle, ensuring that it remains safe and fit for use, and to insure the bicycle against theft, loss or damage. The College will not accept any liability in the event of theft, loss or damage for the replacement of the bicycle or any associated equipment or accessories provided.
- 4.2.20 The College will support transport costs during term time only and for timetabled sessions.
- 4.2.21 The College will offer additional contributions to Learners who are participating in industry placements or work experience.

### **Free Meals at College (16-18 Only)**

- 4.2.22 A learner must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August and must meet the eligibility criteria published in the guidelines available online at [Schools, colleges and children's services : School and college funding and finance - detailed information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-colleges-and-childrens-services-school-and-college-funding-and-finance-detailed-information).
- 4.2.23 Learners aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a free meal if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and must meet the eligibility criteria published in the guidelines available online at [Schools, colleges and children's services : School and college funding and finance - detailed information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-colleges-and-childrens-services-school-and-college-funding-and-finance-detailed-information).
- 4.2.24 Meals provided will be primarily supplied through the College's catering outlets. Where this arrangement is not possible, alternative arrangements will be made.
- 4.2.25 Applicants that do not meet the criteria for Free Meals may opt to apply for discretionary support from the learner support funds, however, any resulting award will be at the College's discretion.

### **Discretionary Meals (19 and Over)**

- 4.2.26 Applicants aged 19 years or over and studying on a programme funded under the Adult Education Budget (AEB) at the beginning of the academic year may opt to apply for College meals through the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSf), however, any resulting award will be at the College's discretion.
- 4.2.27 To be eligible the applicant is required to have a household income less than the minimum thresholds stated in section 4.1.5 of this document.
- 4.2.28 Applicants who are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan are unable to apply for financial support with Discretionary Meals.

### **Care to Learn: Childcare**

- 4.2.29 Applicants aged 16, 17, 18 or 19 years at the start of the academic year should apply for support with childcare costs through the 'Care to Learn' scheme. Learner Services staff can help with applications for 'Care to Learn'.

### **Discretionary Childcare (20+ Only)**

- 4.2.30 Applicants aged over 20 years can apply for support with childcare costs through the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSf) or Advanced Learner Loans Bursary (ALBf).
- 4.2.31 To be eligible the applicant is required to have a household income less than the minimum thresholds stated in section 4.1.5 of this document.
- 4.2.32 The College allocation of funding for childcare is limited, awarded on a first come first serve basis, and therefore there can be no guarantee of funding for every applicant.
- 4.2.33 The College will not fund external childcare, and learners will need to use the College Nursery provision. Exceptions of the above will be reviewed by the Finance Coordinator when an award is made
- 4.2.34 Where funding is awarded towards the cost of childcare with a registered provider they must be an Ofsted-registered Early Years provider or listed on the Ofsted Childcare Register. The College Nursery fulfils these requirements.
- 4.2.35 Financial support for childcare is only provided for a maximum of 2 children. Under exceptional circumstances an appeal may be presented to the Learner Services Team Leader for due consideration should support be required for additional children.
- 4.2.36 Applications for childcare costs must be received by the Financial Support team within 30 working days of the course start date. Applications received after 30 working may not be back-dated and the learner may be liable for any costs incurred.
- 4.2.37 Childcare costs are paid for the learner's timetabled sessions in College, plus an agreed allowance for travel time. The only exceptions to this rule are:
- i. Learners who are undertaking an unwaged work placement as part of their course. Such learners may apply to receive additional support subject to funding availability and written confirmation [from their Tutor] of placement hours and venue.
  - ii. Learners who are undertaking additional independent learning at College, as agreed with a tutor. Such learners may apply to receive additional support subject to signing in and out with the Learners Services Team.
- 4.2.38 The College does not pay for childcare outside of College term time, as per the published session dates, unless prior agreement has been sought and agreed in writing.
- 4.2.39 Children who are eligible for 'Think2' or 'NEG' funding must use their full financial entitlement first and then the College will consider paying any top-up nursery fees except under exceptional circumstances.
- 4.2.40 The College does not pay for administration or booking fees, taster sessions charges, deposits or retainer or holding fees.
- 4.2.41 Should a learner cease to attend for four (4) or more consecutive weeks, or is withdrawn from College at any point during the academic year, financial support for childcare may be withdrawn from the last date of recorded attendance. The responsibility for childcare costs may then revert to the learner from that date.

#### **Course Fees (19+ Only)**

- 4.2.42 There are limited funds available to assist with the cost of tuition fees for learners aged 19 and over who are not fully-funded for their course costs or using an Advanced Learner Loan to fund their course.
- 4.2.43 Applicants must have enrolled, paid a minimum 25% deposit and completed a Direct Debit mandate for the remaining outstanding balance which will be payable over the agreed period as defined in the College Fees Policy.
- 4.2.44 Applicants will only be supported where alternative means of financial support are not available and exceptional circumstances can be evidenced.
- 4.2.45 In exceptional circumstances the College bursary funds may also help with exam/registration fees. Each application will be considered on its own merit within the College criteria/budget constraints.
- 4.2.46 Applicants who are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan are unable to apply for financial support with tuition or exam/registration fees.

#### **Learner Wellbeing and Crisis**

- 4.2.47 The College will ring fence funds to support learners who are requiring additional support in order to maintain their personal wellbeing and or safety (Safeguarding) or find themselves in financial crisis, this may include but not be limited to, homelessness, loss of employment, sudden unforeseen changes in the household income, relationship breakdown/separation/divorce, bankruptcy, long term illness or medical

emergency.

4.2.48 Referrals to the wellbeing and crisis support can only be made via a Progress Coach, Safeguarding Officer or the Financial Support Coordinator.

4.2.49 Learners needs will be assessed and appropriate and or relevant support identified. All support will be provided in kind except under exceptional circumstances where this is not possible.

### 4.3 Funding Awards and Payments

4.3.1 Awards are made on a strictly first come first served basis and are subject to the availability of funds. Applicants will be notified in person and in writing of the amount(s) they have been awarded.

4.3.2 Where practicable the College will purchase and provide items on the applicant's behalf or make payment in kind. Where payment to the applicant is necessary these will be made by BACS directly in an applicant's bank account every fortnight on a Monday, except where the Monday falls as a bank holiday, and then it will be the next banking day thereafter.

4.3.3 Applicants must have their own bank account to receive payments as payments cannot be made to third parties. In all cases the application will be judged on its individual merits as outlined in the ESFA guidelines.

4.3.4 The amount awarded will be specific to each individual application.

### 4.4 Withdrawal

4.4.1 Should an applicant withdraw from their chosen course of study they may be required to repay monies paid to them after their last day of attendance and must return any equipment, books or uniform supplied to them which have been purchased by the College.

### 4.5 Attendance Monitoring and Suspension of Support

4.5.1 Staff administering the funds will examine all applicants' attendance levels and an award may be sanctioned should an applicant falls below 75% attendance.

4.5.2 A Curriculum Director or Course Team Leader may request in writing that an award be sanctioned should a learner (a) fail to attend College for four (4) or more consecutive weeks; (b) fail to keep up to date with course work; (c) be subject to disciplinary action including suspension.

4.5.3 Prior to any award sanction being actioned due diligence checks will be carried out to determine if the learner is currently open to the Safeguarding team, in care, a care leaver, vulnerable or has declared ongoing medical issues. Should the Learner meet any of these conditions no sanction will be actioned without prior consultation with the appropriate support teams.

4.5.4 A sanction may be lifted if and when the Learner reengages with College. However, in the event that no improvements or changes are seen the Learner may have their sanction extended or even their award terminated.

4.5.5 A Learners award will be terminated should they be withdrawn from College.

### 5.0 Appeals

5.1 If any learner is dissatisfied with the decision regarding their award, they will be advised to complete an appeal form within 10 days of receipt of their award letter. They should state clear reasons for their appeal and produce supporting evidence if needed.

5.2 The appeal should be made in writing, using the Financial Support Appeals Form which is available from Learner Services or online, within 10 working days of the learner receiving either an Award Notification or a letter notifying them that they are not eligible for support. Appeals should be addressed to:

Financial Support Appeals  
Learner Services Team Leader  
Burton and South Derbyshire College  
Lichfield Street  
Burton-on-Trent

Staffordshire  
DE14 3RL

- 5.3 The Finance Coordinator will consider the appeal and either confirm or amend the initial decision. The learner will then be advised of the outcome and any action to be taken in writing within 10 working days. The decision of the Finance Coordinator will be final.

## 6.0 Complaints about the financial support process

- 6.1 An applicant cannot complain or appeal where this is a disagreement with the judgement of the financial support teams decision, in assessing application, amount awarded, or in reaching a decision on eligibility, which has been reached in accordance with the published criteria and processes contained in this policy.
- 6.2 Where an applicant has reason to believe that their application has not been handled fairly, objectively or in accordance with the procedures described above, they should write to the Finance Coordinator at Burton and South Derbyshire College, Lichfield Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, DE14 3RL or email [feedback@bsdc.ac.uk](mailto:feedback@bsdc.ac.uk) setting out their reasons.
- 6.3 The Finance Coordinator will then review the handling of the application in the light of the applicant's written statement and may confirm or rescind an earlier decision and a written reply will be sent to the applicant within ten working days of receiving the request for the review of the application. Such decision shall be final.

## APP1 Evidence of Household Income or Benefits

The College will **accept** the following documents as evidence of receipt of benefits or income from employment:

- Tax Credit Award Notice
- Annual Tax Credit Statement (subject to it containing an implicit statement of continuation of support)
- Benefits Agency letter, or confirmation from the Job Centre, setting out eligibility to means tested benefits such as:
  - Income Support
  - Income-related Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
  - Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
  - Housing Benefit

*Note - such evidence should be dated within 3 calendar months of the date of application. Where this is not possible evidence with an older date may be accepted subject to receipt of the last 3 months of supporting bank statements to show/highlighting ongoing receipt of the benefit.*

- Universal Credit statement for the three most recent assessment periods showing their earnings in that period.
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) letter setting out the guarantee element of State Pension Credit for which members of the household maybe entitled. Such evidence should be dated 12 calendar months of the date of application.
- P60 End of Year Certificate for the preceding tax year plus the last 3 consecutive months pay slips or a formal written statement of earnings from an employer for any member of the family, aged 18 or over, who is presently in paid employment.
- SA302 Self-Assessment Tax Calculation or a copy of Annual Accounts with an accompanying letter from an Accountant confirming income during the preceding tax year for any member of the family aged 18 years or over, who is presently in self-employed.

The College **will not accept** the following documents as evidence of receipt of benefits or income from employment:

- Provisional Tax Credit Award Notices.
- Benefits Agency letter setting out eligibility to non-means tested benefits such as:
  - Attendance Allowance
  - Bereavement Allowance
  - Carers Allowance
  - Child Benefit
  - Constant Attendance Allowance
  - Council Tax Reduction Notice
  - Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
  - Guardian Allowance
  - Incapacity Benefit
  - Industrial Injuries Disablement benefit
  - Invalidity benefit
  - Jobseekers Allowance (NI based)
  - Job Grant
  - Local Housing Allowance
  - Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
  - Training Premium
  - Travel to Interview Scheme
  - War Widows/Widowers Pension
  - Widowed Parent's Allowance
  - Widow's Pension
- Bank statements with no other evidence.

## **APP2 Evidence for those In Care, Care Leavers or Living Independently**

### **In Care or a Care Leaver**

The College requires written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority – this is the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority

### **Financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent**

The College requires evidence of their UC or IS award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the Learner's name/confirm they are entitled to the benefits in their own right. The evidence must not state any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education or training. The College must also see a document such as a tenancy agreement and or utility bill in the Learner's name and where a dependent is noted evidence of child benefit or the children's birth certificates where appropriate

### **Learner's receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right**

The College requires evidence of the UC claim from DWP. Evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP must also be provided.

## APP3 Example of UC Statement

GOV.UK

### My UC - John Smith

Your payment this month is

**£2057**

It will be paid into your bank by 29th September 2014

#### How we calculate your payment

Your payment is based on what you've told us and covers the period between

25th  
Aug

and

24th  
Sept

[!] it is important to tell UC immediately about any changes in your circumstances that could affect your UC payments.

[Report a change in my circumstances](#)

#### Allowance

##### Standard allowance

You receive a standard UC allowance each month

**£xxx.xx**

##### Limited capability for work

You said that you are unable to work

**£xxx.xx**

##### Total before adjustments

**£xxxx.xx**

##### Take-home pay

Take-home pay is what's left after tax, national insurance and any pension contributions have been deducted.

Your take-home pay for this period is **£[xxx.xx]**

The first £xx.xx of your take-home pay doesn't affect your Universal Credit monthly amount. Every £1.00 you earn in take-home pay over this £xx.xx reduces your Universal Credit by 65 pence.

The total we take off for take-home pay is

**£ xx.xx**

##### Total adjustments

[Copy tbc] We have adjusted your payment based on the details you gave us. This adjustment may include, non-work income and other benefits, take-home pay, loans, advances, deductions, overpayments or third party payments.

If you need help with this, please call 0800 777 7777

Total adjustments

**£ xxx.xx**

##### Sanctions