

STUDENT RELATED POLICY: FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS: CODE OF PRACTICE

This policy is annually reviewed to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Approved by: Chief Operating Officer Reviewed by: Assistant Principal: Student Experience, Head of Safeguarding & Wellbeing	
Date of next review	March 2025

This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex, Sexual orientation, and Disability.

1. Document Control

1.1. Document Details

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1.2. Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	Dec 2019	Dawn Telford	Definitive Release
2.0	Feb 2022	Dawn Telford / Vicki Locke	Definitive Release
3.0	May 2023	Debbie Holland / Sharon Posey	Definitive Release
3.1	March 2024	Sharon Posey / Abid Hussain	Amendments
3.2	July 2024	Sharon Posey / Abid Hussain	Amendment to 3.4

1.3. Distribution

Name	Email	Organisation
All Staff	Uploaded to SharePoint	Boston College

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The College aims to assist students with financial support where there is a barrier to join, participate in or continue on a programme of study.
- 1.2 The College will provide up to date advice and information on financial support available through Learner Services. This includes information on: -
 - HE Financial Support Scheme
 - Care to Learn
 - Learner Support Funds, including the 16-19 Bursary Fund, Further Education Free Meals, 19+ Learner Support Fund and Loans Bursary Fund
 - Be Brilliant Fund
 - Other types of funding that become available
- 1.3 The College will refer to other agencies that can assist with financial advice on government benefits and local support arrangements e.g. CAB, Job Centre etc.
- 1.4 The College will prioritise financial support to students who are suffering financial hardship, as identified through national guidance such as that provided by ESFA and AoC.
- 1.5 The funds available are limited and therefore cannot be guaranteed to all students. The College identifies and prioritises financial support through a tiering system, however, funds may not cover all student expenses.

The exception to this is Further Education Free Meals which is guaranteed if students are eligible.
- 1.6 The overriding principle for providing financial support is: -

To assist students with the costs of accessing, participating in or remaining on their chosen course of study where the absence of such assistance would result in the student not enrolling, withdrawing early or failing to gain their qualification.
- 1.7 The College will use allocated financial support funds specifically to: -
 - a) assist with participation in post-16 education, particularly amongst people who may otherwise not participate;
 - b) support the retention and achievement of students.

2. LEARNER SUPPORT FUNDS

- 2.1 The procedures for operating the College's Learner Support Funds, including the 16-19 Bursary Scheme, are developed in accordance with national guidance and the principle set out in section 1.6 above.
- 2.2 These procedures will be reviewed annually by the Head of Safeguarding & Wellbeing, in conjunction with relevant team members and cross-college managers.
- 2.3 Notes for guidance will be reviewed and updated annually by the Head of Safeguarding & Wellbeing, and training or updates on financial support will be provided to appropriate staff.
- 2.4 Online applications and guidance will be made available on our website via Pay My Student.
- 2.5 Applications forms will be available for the following funds on our website and on request via the Bursary Office.
 - HE Financial Support Scheme
 - Be Brilliant – A tutor must support any Be Brilliant application by providing details of why the student is applying and confirming all other avenues of financial support have been explored.
 - 16-19 Bursary Fund
 - Further Education Free Meals
 - 19+ Learner Support Fund & Loans Bursary Fund.

3. TYPES OF SUPPORT

- 3.1 Claims for assistance will be considered for the following purposes, depending upon the age of the student and prioritised dependent upon funds available and criteria set by funding bodies: -
 - Transport
 - Equipment, books and uniform
 - Extreme hardship
 - Child care
 - Course or examination fees
 - Subsistence in way of food credits/allowance
 - Other education relevant costs e.g., trips, UCAS fees
- 3.2 Where assistance is provided, this will normally take the form of a grant (which does not have to be repaid); please note that in some circumstances, equipment may be required to be returned if a student leaves the programme early, and at the end of their study programme.
- 3.3 Wherever possible and appropriate, financial support will be directly paid to suppliers of goods or services rather than cash payments (payment in kind).

- 3.4 All financial support is conditional upon students meeting the College's target of 90% attendance and progression criteria as set out in the guidance.

4. THRESHOLDS

We aim to target the most support at those with the greatest financial need and as such use a tiered system to award support. As such any award will depend on your financial need, which we assess using your household income or receipt of qualifying benefits, your course requirements, and our available funds. The college has set the household income amount of £45,000 to apply for financial support.

5. PUBLICITY

Student and staff awareness of financial support available will be promoted via posters, review/offer letters, emails, staff training, Learner Services staff, College website and Learner Cross College Teams.

6. THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- 6.1 The procedure is designed to identify those students in greatest hardship and enable applicants to receive a timely assessment and response to their application. Decisions will always be given in writing and an appeals process is in place for students who require it.

- 6.2 The application process is as follows: -

- i. Student completes relevant application form/s and submits, together with relevant documentation, to Learner Services via Pay My Student on the College website.
- ii. HE Financial Support Scheme and Be Brilliant applications are not available on Pay My Student. These application forms need to be sent to bursary@boston.ac.uk or handed into Reception.
- iii. If the student requests support with the application process, they should contact the Learner Services team; in this case an appointment will be made within five working days.
- iv. The Bursary Team will assess the application against the written guidance and criteria and approve or decline support. A decision will be made within fifteen working days of receipt.

All awards will be approved by Head of Safeguarding & Wellbeing.

- v. Written confirmation of the decision, and where applicable, details of the support awarded, will be sent to the student via their personal email. If the student is under 18 an email will also be sent to parent/carers where we hold those details.

Students over 18 can give permission to email parents/carers, where we have permission we will send an award email to them.

- vi. Where the student falls into the eligibility criteria, but support is declined through lack of available funds, the application will be retained on a waiting list should any funds become available later in the year.
- vii. The Finance Department will make direct payments to service providers on behalf of the student. Where payments are to be made direct to a student, these will normally be made in advance and via bank transfer other than in exceptional circumstances which must be agreed by the Head of Safeguarding & Wellbeing.
- viii. Students have a right to appeal decisions. Students can appeal in the first instance to the Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing, if still not resolved to students' satisfaction then they must appeal in writing to the Assistant Principal: Student Experience within 10 working days.
- ix. Students have the right to request additional financial support. Students can request additional support by emailing bursary@boston.ac.uk, especially if household circumstances have changed. However, their application will still need to meet criteria and awards may not be made if funds are not available.