

WEA Student Support Policy (Financial Support)

1. Purpose

To define students' entitlements to financial support.

2. Values

The WEA believes that all students should have access to appropriate financial support. Key values include:

- Providing impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) about available support
- Prioritising limited funds for those in greatest need, e.g. students in the Skills Funding Agency's priority groups
- Transparent processes for administering any funds designated for student support
- A clear appeals procedure for use where funding has been refused
- Referral to alternative sources of support, either within the WEA or externally where this would result in a better end-result for the student.

3. Scope

"Student support" refers primarily to financial support for students outside the classroom. It is complemented by the [Disclosure of Needs Policy](#) which aims to ensure that students receive practical support inside the classroom (usually referred to as Learning Support). The main sources of financial support are:

- The SFA's Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) allocated directly to WEA to cover transport, childcare, books and equipment, meals and accommodation, etc. for students suffering financial hardship
- 24+ Advanced Learning Loans to help with the costs of a college or training course if you're 24 or older, administered through the SFA but where WEA has a limited Information, Advice and Guidance role. Care to Learn which can help with childcare costs while you study, which are administered through the SFA's Student Bursary Support Service but where WEA has a limited Information, Advice and Guidance role
- Occasional resources or services that may be provided by project funding or via partner organisations, e.g. funded childcare provision, free IAG sessions, free trips.

4. Policy

The WEA policy is to:

- Ensure that all students receive information about financial support and its availability in line with the [Student Services Strategy](#)
- Give students, staff and volunteers clear guidance about student eligibility for all types of support, in line with the requirements of funding bodies
- Provide students with appropriate opportunities to discuss their support needs confidentially and one-to-one
- Ensure confidentiality during application processes in line with the [Confidentiality Policy](#)

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- Manage Discretionary Learner Support to ensure that those in greatest need are supported in line with SFA rules
- Ensure fair and equitable administration of Discretionary Learner Support in line with SFA rules
- Train and support staff to administer the DLS fairly as above
- Give students clear information about the processes of application and appeal
- Give students clear reasons for refused Discretionary Learner Support applications in line with the Appeals Procedures for DLS Applications.
- Signpost or refer refused students to other sources of financial support wherever possible
- Ensure that any other sources of support are similarly managed in line with the requirements of their funding bodies.

5. Implementation

Implementation of the DLS is described in the WEA document "Support for Students – DLS and ALS Guidance Notes for All Staff", and its associated forms.

6. Management

The Director of Student Services has overall responsibility for student support and for administration of Discretionary Learner Support in line with SFA rules. Regional roles and responsibilities are set out in "Support for Students" described in 5 above. Where there are Discretionary Learner Support Fund eligibility issues and appeals, the Director of Student Services will consult SFA Funding Rules. The resulting decision will normally be final. See Appeals Procedure for [DLS Applications for appeals](#) beyond the WEA.

7. Monitoring

Nationally, the Director of Student Services will monitor use of Discretionary Learner Support by region. Reports will be generated monthly from WEAmis, and the Education Director for Student Services and Student Support Team will take steps to discuss regional imbalances in spending and reallocate the funds if necessary.

Regionally:

- Eligibility checking is the responsibility of tutor organisers, supported by the regional IAG/learning support coordinators and by Regional Management Teams, with support from the Director of Student Services as described in 5 above.
- Monitoring is the responsibility of Regional Education Managers (REMs), with the Student Support Team.

8. Links to other policies and documents

This policy is part of a suite of Student Support policies defining student support entitlements. Most relevant policies are publicly available through the WEA's website at <http://www.wea.org.uk/about/policies>