

WEA Student Support Policy (Financial Support) 2020

1. Purpose

To define students' entitlements to financial support.

2. Values

The WEA believes that all students should have access to appropriate financial support to support course costs and learning difficulties, disabilities or other identified needs. Key values include:

- Prioritising limited funds for those in greatest need
- 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 & Eligibility

All students accessing all support fund must:

- 19 years old on the 31st August
- Fully enrolled on to a WEA course funded by the ESFA or Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) where you live.

The main sources of financial support are:

- Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) allocated directly to WEA to cover transport, childcare, books and equipment, meals and accommodation, etc. for students suffering financial hardship. This is funded by the ESFA or AEB funding via Mayoral Combined Authorities
- Additional Learning Support (ALS) helps the WEA work flexibly and provides support activity to meet the learning needs of students who have an identified learning difficulty or disability, a health issue or other support needs. This is funded by the ESFA or AEB funding via Mayoral Combined Authorities.
- Low wage offer towards free tuition fees for individuals earning a certain salary set by ESFA or the individuals Mayoral Combined Authority.
- 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.

- For students aged 19 years old after the 31st August Care to Learn which can help with childcare costs while you study, which are administered through the ESFA'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. Current information on financial support can be found by visiting <https://www.wea.org.uk/learn-us/course-fees-and-financial-support>

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 Manage Discretionary Learner Support to ensure that those in greatest need are supported in line with ESFA rules

- Ensure fair and equitable administration of Discretionary Learner Support in line with ESFA and MCA 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

- Up to date Information can be accessed on the [WEA website](#) and [WEA intranet](#)
- Training offered to tutors and WEA staff via Learning and development opportunities by the Student Services Manager,

6. Management

- The Student Services Manager has responsibility for student support and for administration of Discretionary Learner Support and Additional Learner Support in line with ESFA and MCA rules.

- The Student Support Team Leader and assistant to process DLS and ALS forms within five working days and record this in to WEAMIS.
- Regional managers will be identified to help promote and manage student support working closely with the Student Services Manager.
- Where there are DLS or ALS eligibility issues and appeals, the Director of Curriculum, Quality and Student Services will consult ESFA and MCA Funding Rules. The resulting decision will normally be final. See Appeals Procedure for DLS Applications for appeals beyond the WEA.

7. Monitoring

Nationally, the Student Services Manager will monitor use of Discretionary Learner Support and Additional Learner Support Needs by region. Reports will be generated monthly from WEAMIS, and the Director for Curriculum, Quality and 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 managers and Education Support Assistant (ESA) coordinators and by Regional Management Teams, with support from the Student Services Manager 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 <https://www.wea.org.uk/about-us/policies>

Date of this Review	Date of next Review	Policy reviewed and updated by:	Policy approved by:
June 2020	June 2021	Student Services Manager	Director of Quality and Student Services