

Guide to Student Funding

Academic Session
2023-24

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Forth
Valley
College



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How to contact us if you need help:

Phone: 01324 403000 (ask to speak to Student Funding)

Email: funding@forthvalley.ac.uk

In-person*: Falkirk Campus Student Hub, Grangemouth Road, Falkirk, FK2 9AD

*Term-time only, please contact us to make an appointment outside of term-time.

SECTION 1 – TYPES OF FUNDING

Which courses are eligible for financial support?

The type of financial support varies depending on which course the student will be studying. The tables below detail which courses are eligible for each type of funding, and who the funding body would be.

Full-Time – HNC, HND, Degree (HE)

Type of Funding	Funding Source	Funding Body
Maintenance	SAAS Bursary / Student Loan	SAAS / Student Loan Company
Travel	SAAS Bursary / Student Loan	SAAS / Student Loan Company
Housing	Discretionary Fund (HE)	College (Student Funding)
Childcare	Childcare Fund (HE)	College (Student Funding)

Full-Time – Non-Advanced Courses (e.g., NC, City & Guilds etc.) (FE)

Type of Funding	Funding Source	Funding Body
Maintenance	Bursary / EMA	College (Student Funding)
Travel	Bursary	College (Student Funding)
Study Materials	Bursary	College (Student Funding)
Housing	Discretionary Fund (FE)	College (Student Funding)
Childcare	Childcare Fund (FE)	College (Student Funding)

Part-Time - Non-Advanced Courses (e.g., NC, City & Guilds etc.) (FE)

Type of Funding	Funding Source	Funding Body
Travel	Bursary	College (Student Funding)
Childcare	Childcare Fund (FE)	College (Student Funding)

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

Students can apply for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) only if they meet both of the conditions below.

1. They are a student who is aged 16 or 17 on the date the course starts (some 18-year-olds, depending on the circumstances),
- AND**
2. Their parental household gross income is below the Scottish Government threshold of:
 - a. £24,421 with no other dependent children in the household,
 - b. £26,884 with other dependent children in the household.
- OR**
- b. £26,884 with other dependent children in the household.

EMA funding is available to both full-time and part-time students. If awarded, EMA is paid at a rate of **£30.00** per week and this excludes college holiday periods.

Students attending college on school programmes should apply via their Local Authority.

If awarded EMA, it is paid in arrears directly into the student's bank account. EMA can only be paid into a bank account where the student is a named account holder.

An individual EMA Learning Agreement will be generated which will outline the attendance, process, and conduct requirements, as well as any targets/objectives the student must achieve to be eligible to receive payments. This Learning Agreement must be agreed to before any payments can be released.

Full-time EMA students will also be eligible to be assessed for a Bursary award for Study Materials where applicable.

Away from Parental Home Maintenance Allowance

Students under 18 years of age who have a permanent home of their own may be considered for an 'Away from Parental Home Maintenance Allowance' subject to specific criteria.

This funding is in addition to EMA. The 'Away from Parental Home Allowance' is also subject to a financial assessment against the student's and their parents' income.

If you think you may be eligible for the Away from Parental Home Maintenance Allowance, contact Student Funding for more information.

Further Education Bursary Fund

The Further Education (FE) Bursary Fund is the most heavily accessed fund within the College. There are eligibility rules which are set out by the Scottish Funding Council that the College has to abide by.

A student can be eligible to be assessed for funding from the FE Bursary Fund if they meet all the following criteria:

1. The student is residentially eligible (see Residency),
2. The student is beyond their statutory school leaving age and has left school,
3. They do not currently receive Income Replacement Benefits or alternative funding, or are not eligible to continue to receive these funds while studying their course,
4. They meet the Duration of Support criteria (see Duration of Support)

All funding from the Further Education Bursary fund is paid fortnightly, two weeks in arrears, by BACS directly into the student's bank account and is dependent on meeting the attendance, engagement, and conduct requirements for the payment period.

The FE Bursary fund has multiple elements or funds which can be applied for.

Maintenance Allowance

This is a means-tested allowance to cover daily living costs while at college. Although some types of maintenance allowance are exempt from this. The maximum rate or type of the Maintenance Allowance depends on the student's circumstances.

Maintenance Allowance	Maximum Weekly Rate
Independent Student Bursary	£125.55
Parentally Supported Student	£125.55
Parentally Su	£99.35
Away from Parental Home Maintenance Allowance	£49.91
Universal Credit Top-Up Bursary	£28.00
Care Experienced Bursary	£225.00

Independent Student Bursary

Students will be assessed as an independent student if they are 25 years of age or older on the start date of the course.

If the student is under 25 years of age on the start date of their course, they may qualify to be assessed as an independent student if one or more of the following applies to them. (They must be able to provide appropriate documentary evidence to show they meet the criteria.)

- a. They are married or in a civil partnership (see paragraphs 23). This does not include situations where the student was married but that marriage broke down prior to the start date of the course.
- b. They have no living parents or guardians.
- c. They are caring for a child dependent on them.
- d. They have supported themselves for periods aggregating no less than three years. This includes periods where the individual was either:
 - e. In employment and earning equal to or more than current income support levels.
 - f. Supported by a partner with earnings equal to or more than current income support levels.
 - g. On a training programme operated by or on behalf of the Scottish Government, or Skills Development Scotland (SDS).
 - h. In receipt of unemployment benefit/jobseeker's allowance and/or can provide confirmation that they were available or registered for employment or actively seeking employment.
 - i. In receipt of employment and support allowance, sickness benefit, invalidity pension, incapacity benefit, maternity allowance, severe disablement allowance, statutory sick pay or statutory maternity pay.
 - j. In receipt of income support.
 - k. In receipt of Universal Credit.
 - l. Living away from the parental home and can provide a copy of a formal rent agreement for the relevant period.
 - m. In receipt of housing benefit for the relevant period.
 - n. Caring for a person (adult or child) dependent on them as the primary carer.
 - o. Estranged from their parents and can provide proof of this.

This bursary is means-assessed on the students' income, and where relevant their partner's income. (See **Means-Assessment** for more information.)

Parentally Supported Student Bursary

Any students aged 18-25 on the start date of their course will be assessed for a Parentally Supported Student Bursary unless they meet the criteria for the Independent Student, Universal Credit, or Care Experienced bursaries.

This bursary is means-assessed on the parental household income. (See Parent/Parental definition and **Means-Assessment** for more information.)

The maximum bursary rate prior to any means-assessment is determined by whether the student lives within the parental home (Parentally Supported at Home) or has their own permanent established accommodation (Parentally Supported Away from Home). Any students wishing to be assessed for the higher Away from Home rate, will need to provide evidence to support this.

Universal Credit Top-Up Bursary

If the student is currently a Universal Credit claimant, they may be eligible to remain on Universal Credits while studying.

See the **Universal Credits Student Guide** for more information on whether you are likely to be able to remain on Universal Credit, although this decision will be made by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

If the student can remain on Universal Credit (UC) while studying, they can apply for the Universal Credit Top-Up Bursary which is set at the maximum payable rate where it would not affect their UC claim.

This bursary is not means-assessed. The student will either meet the criteria and be awarded the bursary or not, and it is at the fixed rate shown in the table above.

Care Experienced Bursary

If the student is care experienced, a care leaver, a looked-after-child or has been in kinship care; they may be eligible for the Care Experienced Bursary.

See the **Care Experienced Student Guide** for more information about the criteria for this bursary. Or you can contact Student Funding.

This bursary is not means-assessed. The student will either meet the criteria and be awarded the bursary or not, and it is at the fixed rate shown in the table above.

Travel Funding

If the student lives more than 2 miles from their campus, they can apply for travel funding from the Bursary fund.

The maximum Travel Funding rates are based on the most cost-effective method of travel to college, a weekly student bus ticket. Regardless of how you choose to travel to college and the relative costs; the maximum Travel Funding rates remain the same.

Student Weekly Ticket - Zones	Maximum Weekly Rate
Stirling & Clacks Zone	£19.00
Falkirk Zone	£19.00
Forth Valley Zone	£25.00

To find out more about the bus travel zones you can visit the **McGill's Scotland East Website**.

Travel funding is not normally paid to students under the age of 22 as they are entitled to a free bus pass. Students can apply for this online on the NEC Website or by contacting their Local Authority.

If a student under the age of 22 cannot reasonably reach the college by bus, they should contact Student Funding as soon as possible to discuss the option to appeal. (Evidence to support the reason for appeal will be required.)

This fund is means-assessed based on the student's income and the relevant household income. (See Means-Assessment for more information.)

Please Note: The Travel Funding rates are set for the year based on the cost of a weekly student ticket at the beginning of the 2023-24 Academic Year. Any changes to the cost of the bus tickets are at the discretion of the bus operator and will not be reflected in the Travel Funding rates.

Study Materials

The Study Materials fund is a non-monetary award that is awarded to students to cover the cost of essential materials for their course.

The majority of this fund is paid directly to the student's department to cover the cost of essentials such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). However, some departments will require students to purchase items such as uniform for work placements or PVG applications, and those who have been awarded Study Materials funding will be eligible for reimbursement from the Study Materials fund.

Only certain materials, from approved suppliers can be claimed against the Study Materials fund. If you are unsure if your purchase would be covered then contact Student Funding for confirmation.

This fund is means-assessed based on the student's income and the relevant household income. (See **Means-Assessment** for more information.)

16-17-year-olds are exempt from means-assessment for this fund. However, to receive any relevant reimbursement they must have applied and been awarded Study Materials funding.

Childcare Funding

Financial assistance may be available towards the eligible cost of registered childcare for days when the student is timetabled to be in college or at a mandatory work placement as part of their course.

The Childcare Fund is cash limited and the College gives no assistance with costs incurred during college holiday periods and dates the student is not in college or not on placement. The student should seek clarification from their childcare provider on the fees which they will be required to pay before they finalise their childcare arrangements.

Eligible Childcare Costs

Childcare funding is means-assessed (see **Means-Assessment**) and the student can be awarded a percentage of their eligible childcare costs for each week they are in college. Students who have a partner who is at home (i.e., not in work or education) during their timetabled classes, will not be awarded childcare funding.

Costs incurred for the provision of childcare for timetabled classes and mandatory work placement (plus 1 hour's travel to college and then from college each day) are eligible for assessment for funding.

Please note that certain childcare providers will ask for payment during college holiday periods and for days or times when the student is not timetabled to be in college. The College will not pay for these days or times.

Childcare Award Rates

Childcare funding is means-assessed based on the student's income and their partner where relevant. The means-assessment determines what percentage of the eligible costs (as described above) is payable.

The table below shows the breakdown of the gross household income brackets and the percentage of eligible costs which are payable.

Gross Assessable Household Income	Percentage of Eligible Childcare Costs Payable
£0 - £24,999	100%
£25,000 - £29,999	75%
£30,000 - £39,999	50%
£40,000+	25%
Lone Parent	100%

The student can claim childcare costs incurred with any registered Childcare Provider. This means they must be registered with the Care Inspectorate.

The rates charged by Childcare Providers can vary. As the Childcare Fund is a cash-limited-fund, the college has fee caps. If the chosen Childcare Provider charges more than the cap, the college will only award funding up to the cap. Any additional balance still due is the responsibility of the student.

Type of Childcare Provision	Provider Fee Type	Maximum Fee Cap
Childminder	Hourly Rate	£6.50/hour
Nursery	Day Session	£55.00/session
Nursery	Half Session	£32.50/session
Before and After School Care (Non-Childminder)	Breakfast Club	£8.00/session
Before and After School Care (Non-Childminder)	After-School Club	£15.00/session

Childcare Funding Awards

Once an application for Childcare funding has been assessed, the childcare provider will be asked to complete an Agreement and Weekly Claim Form.

This will then be assessed against the eligibility criteria. If assessed as eligible, a weekly award will be generated and paid fortnightly, two-weeks in arrears directly to the Childcare Provider.

Payment is dependent on the student meeting the attendance, engagement, and conduct requirements for the payment period.

Any costs not covered by the college Childcare Funding either due to ineligible costs claimed, fee caps, or non-payment must be covered by the student. The college is not liable for any outstanding invoices or balances due to the provider from the student.

Discretionary Funding

The Discretionary Fund is offered by the college in two forms: recurring housing funding, and a Student Assistance Fund where one-off awards can be made. It is a cash-limited fund as such the availability of this funding can be withdrawn at any time at the college's discretion.

The total amount a student can receive from this fund during the 2023-24 Academic Year is capped.

- HE Students can receive up to a maximum of £4,000 (this is subject to change pending communication from SAAS).
- FE Students can receive up to a maximum of £5,000.

This is inclusive of payments from the Housing Fund and from the Student Assistance Fund.

Housing Funding

Students on full-time FE or HE courses can apply for assistance with their rent or mortgage costs while they are at college. This is paid as percentage of your weekly rent/ mortgage commitments as the Discretionary funds are cash limited, we cannot pay the whole amount.

Eligible Housing Costs

The weekly housing cost is calculated based on the student's portion of the rent/mortgage cost. If there are multiple people living at the property who are liable for the housing costs, the cost will be divided equally before calculating any award.

If the student has a private tenancy, the property owner must be registered with the Scottish Landlord Registry before the costs will be considered for award.

If the student has a mortgage, the assessable cost will be the pro rata weekly contracted cost. If the student makes over-payments these will not be considered as part of the calculation.

If the student has informal housing costs, such as digs payments to parent(s)/guardian(s), these will not be eligible for assessment for Housing Funding.

Housing Award Rates

Housing funding is means-assessed against the student's income and, if relevant, their partner. The table below shows the household income brackets and the percentage of eligible housing costs payable.

Gross Household Income	Percentage of Eligible Housing Costs Payable
Lone Person (No Other Source of Income)	60%
Lone Person, OR	50%

Gross Household Income	Percentage of Eligible Housing Costs Payable
£25,000 - £29,000	40%
£30,000	30%

Any Housing Funding award will be rounded up to the nearest whole pound and is capped at a maximum weekly award of £70.00 per week.

All funding from the Housing fund is paid fortnightly, two weeks in arrears, by BACS directly into the student's bank account and is dependent on meeting the attendance, engagement, and conduct requirements for the payment period.

Student Assistance Fund

The Student Assistance Fund aims to assist students who experience unexpected financial difficulties due to circumstances which could not have been predicted at the start of their course.

The Student Assistance Fund is for use in instances of financial hardship. The fund is intended to provide financial help to students whose access to or continuation in, further education may be impeded by financial considerations or where students, for other reasons, face financial difficulties.

Before applying the student must have taken up their maximum entitlement to all other funding, such as bursary, student loan, or other grants.

There is no maximum number of times that a student can apply to or be awarded funds from the Student Assistance Fund throughout the academic year however any payments made will contribute towards their discretionary funding cap (see above).

More information can be found on the Student Hub page on Moodle or from Student Funding directly.

Additional Support Needs for Learning Allowance

Additional support towards travel-related expenses may be awarded to a disabled student who, as a result of their disability, is obliged to incur additional personal expenditure arising from their attendance at college.

For example, the college may be able to award funding to pay for taxi transportation for a student.

Where a student already receives funding for travel, such as Adult Disability Payment mobility component, the college can use the Additional Support Needs for Learning Allowance to top-up, but not duplicate, existing funding.

If the student wishes to be assessed for the Additional Support Needs for Learning Allowance, contact Student Funding.

SECTION 2 – ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

Eligibility Criteria

Residency

In order to qualify for an award from any source of funding, the student must meet the residency requirements.

As the legislation relating to residence is complex and is dependent on an individual's circumstances, students are advised to contact Student Funding if they are unsure about whether they will meet the residency requirements.

When students apply for funding, they may need to provide proof of your residency status via a UK passport, Home Office Share Code or Biometric Residence Permit.

Orkney & Shetlands Students

If the student is coming from Orkney or Shetland to attend a course at Forth Valley College, they are not eligible for Bursary funding from the College. However, if they are eligible for EMA, they should apply to the College for EMA only. If they want to be considered for Bursary funding, they should apply to their local Islands Authority.

Please note that as Orkney and Shetland Councils do not operate within the same national policy as Forth Valley College you should be aware that much of the information within this guide may not apply to you.

Duration of Support

In order to be eligible for an award from the FE Bursary fund students must be the duration of support criteria.

First-time students (that have never previously been supported), including those who are on their first learning pathway as a continuing student, can be supported for the duration of their studies where they are showing appropriate academic progression in their FE studies.

The expectation is that students will usually be moving up through SCQF levels 1-6, but students can be supported to repeat levels if the college judges that this is the appropriate academic pathway.

The student can be allocated an additional year ('+1 year') of support. This can be used for:

- An academic repeat year
- A medical or compassionate repeat year

Returner students who have previously completed a period of FE or HE study at least one full academic year ago, and who has already utilised their '+1 year' of support may be supported for an additional period. However, this is subject to the appeal

process. (See Appeal Process for more information.)

This can include students who already hold a qualification at the same or a higher level than the course they are enrolling in.

Any previous 'fees-only' awards, or support for received while aged under 18 (including, EMA, SAAS, or bursary awards) will be disregarded when determining a student's duration of support.

Means-Assessment

EMA, FE Bursary (Travel, Study Materials, and some Maintenance types), Childcare, and Housing awards are means-tested. As such the student's income, their parent(s)', or partner's income will be taken into consideration when assessing the award.

When assessing parent(s)' or partner's income, their gross income received in the previous tax year is used. This means that for applications relating to courses in the 2023-24 academic year, the income figures used are from the 2022-23 tax year.

When assessing a student's income, their expected gross income for 2023-24 will be used. This is because only the income which will be received while the student is studying is assessable.

Any funds awarded may be reduced by the amount that the student's parent(s) or partner would be considered to be able to provide towards their expenses.

If there are other members of the student's immediate family who are attending Further or Higher Education who are also eligible for Student Support Funding and are being assessed against the same income, then the assessable household income is divided amongst the students and will reduce the amount used for assessment. Relevant evidence must be submitted to support this.

Note: this does not apply to students who are in receipt of EMA or those eligible for Travel and Materials awards only (e.g., those who are under 18 or those who are in receipt of Benefits).

Parent(s)' Income

Students who are being assessed as being parentally supported (At Home or Away from Home), may have their FE Bursary, Travel, and Study Materials award reduced based on their parental household income.

Examples of parental household income, and the equivalent deduction from the annual award are shown in the table below.

Parental Household Gross Annual Income (2022-23)	Deduction from Total Annual Award
Less than £24,275	NIL
£24,275	£45
£31,745	£875
£41,735	£1,985
£49,664	£2,866

After the contribution has been assessed, it will be reduced by £152 in respect of each additional dependent child in the household (i.e., any child under the age of 16, or aged 16-18 and in full-time education).

If a student’s assessable parent makes maintenance payments for any dependent children who do not live in their household, this will be taken off the gross annual income before calculating any deductions. Relevant evidence must be submitted to support this.

Partner’s Income

Students who are being assessed as an Independent Student who live with their partner, may have their FE Bursary, Travel, and Study Materials award reduced based on their partner’s income.

Examples of a partner’s income, and the equivalent deduction from the annual award are shown in the table below.

Partner’s	Deduction from Total Annual Award
Less than £20,643	NIL
£20,643	£45
£27,933	£855
£35,538	£1,700
£50,568	£3,370

After the contribution has been assessed, it will be reduced by £152 in respect of each dependent child in the household (i.e., any child under the age of 16, or aged 16-18 and in full-time education).

If a student’s partner makes maintenance payments for any dependent children who do not live in their household, this will be taken off the gross annual income before calculating any deductions. Relevant evidence must be submitted to support this.

Student’s Income

The amount of income a student receives is not used to assess their award. It is usually the type of income (i.e., income-replacement benefits) which is used to determine if a student is eligible to receive funding.

However, there are certain types of income which are used to reduce a student’s award. These types of income are those which are determined to be ‘unearned income’ by HMRC.

Unearned income received above £24.19 per week reduces the student’s annual award on a ‘pound-for-pound’ basis. This income includes:

- All trust income.
- Income replacement benefits.
- Maintenance payments paid to the student (for the student).
- All pension income (state/private/employer).
- Other unearned income.

After the annual unearned income has been assessed, it will be reduced by £152 in respect of each dependent child in the household (i.e., any child under the age of 16, or aged 16-18 and in full-time education).

If the student makes maintenance payments for any dependent children who do not live in their household, this will be taken off the assessable income amount before calculating any deductions. Relevant evidence must be submitted to support this.

SECTION 3 – APPLYING FOR FUNDING

The Application Process

Once the student has completed their enrolment process and is fully enrolled on a fundable course, they will receive an email inviting them to apply for funding.

Applications are made via an online application form. The form should be completed in full, and all required evidence uploaded to the site. For information on how to complete the online funding application, see the Online Application How to Guide.

The Student Funding Team will work with the student to review their funding application and evidence and once their application has been finalised, it will be sent to the Senior Student Funding Officer for awarding.

Once your finalised application has been assessed and awarded, the student will be notified by email. Any awards made to the student will be detailed on their Award Letter, which is accessible via the Online Application website.

So long as the student’s application and all required evidence is submitted to Student Funding prior to the deadlines below, any funding awards will be backdated to the start of the student’s enrolment.

Course Start Date	Closing Date
21 August 2023	Friday 06 October 2023
15 January 2024	Friday 01 March 2023
Any Other Course	6 weeks from the start date (last Friday in the 6-week period)

Applications and evidence received after the closing date will not normally be backdated. The student can appeal against this decision if there are good reasons for the late submission of the application and/or evidence. For more information on this process, see Appeals.

Evidence Requirements

Once the application form has been submitted, the student will be provided with a list of evidence requirements. The evidence requested is based on the information provided on the application form, so the form must be completed fully and accurately.

Required evidence may relate to:

- The student,
- The student’s parental household and any relevant dependents,
- The student’s partner and any relevant dependents.

Student Funding will request the minimum amount of evidence required to make a full and accurate assessment. Any information uploaded to the application form which is not relevant will be removed.

Evidence must be uploaded directly to the Online Application Form. (See **Uploading Evidence Guide** for more information.) All images or scans must be of the full document and include all pages. Any evidence provided which is incorrect, incomplete or has information purposefully removed, then the document will be rejected, and you will be asked to submit the document in its entirety.

All evidence provided is held on secure servers and is treated in compliance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act. See the college **GDPR policy** for more information.

As the Student Funding Team helps the student to complete the form and reviews the evidence, further evidence may be requested. This is done so a full and accurate award can be issued to the student.

If the student is having difficulty providing the required documents, or is unsure of what evidence to provide, they can contact Student Funding for advice.

Appeals

Students who do not meet the eligibility criteria for either an individual fund, or for funding overall are able to submit an appeal to Student Funding. This appeal can request that their application to that fund or for overall funding can be re-assessed with a view to being approved.

Additionally, students whose application and/or evidence is submitted after the relevant closing date can also submit an appeal to Student Funding. This appeal can request that their funding award be re-assessed with a view to their funding being backdated to the start of their enrolment.

Submitting an Appeal

Once a student has been notified that their application has been refused, they should first look at the reason for refusal and at any related notes left by Student Funding on their application form.

If the student believes they have grounds for an appeal, they should contact Student Funding and request an Appeal Form.

The appeal form should be completed in full and then emailed back to Student Funding, alongside any relevant information and evidence to support the appeal.

The Appeal Decision

The appeal is then sent to the Senior Student Funding Officer for review. The information held within the student's application form and the contents of the appeal will be reviewed and a decision will be made.

Once the decision has been made, the student will receive an email with the outcome of their appeal, and the reason for the decision.

If a student is unhappy with the outcome of their appeal, the student can re-appeal this decision. They can do this by emailing Student Funding with a full explanation as to why they are re-appealing and provide all relevant information and supporting evidence.

This is then sent to the Systems and Management Accountant who will review the case. They will then provide a final decision which will be sent to the student. Their decision is final and binding.

SECTION 4 – AFTER FUNDING IS AWARDED

Payments

Payments for all student funds, excluding Childcare, are paid directly to the student. Funds will only be paid into a valid bank account where the student is the account holder. Exceptions will only be made where evidence can be provided that a third party has either power of attorney or is a court-appointed intervener/guardian.

Once awarded, students will gain access to their award letter via the Online Application Form. This contains a breakdown of all funds awarded, the weekly award amounts, any deductions which have been made, and a full schedule of all payments and their dates.

Change of Circumstances

If a student's circumstances change during the academic year, they must contact Student Funding immediately. This is because changes to the student's financial or personal circumstances may affect how much they are eligible to receive; and a recalculation of their award may be required.

Changes can include (but are not limited to):

- The student's address,
- The student's email address,
- The people who live in the assessable household (the student's, or their parental household),
- If the level of means-assessable income has gone up or down by 15% or more.

Responsibilities

Funding awards are made on the basis that the student will continue to engage appropriately with their studies for the duration of their course. (See the Student Absence & Attendance Policy and the Student Engagement Policy for more information.)

Students are also expected to conduct themselves appropriately while at college. Any periods of suspension or exclusion will result in non-payment of any funds for the duration.

Overpayment of Funds

A student's funding award may be revised or withdrawn by the College at any time if:

- The student withdraws from their course or is transferred to a course which is not fundable.
- The student fails to comply with the conditions of the award.
- The student fails to submit any relevant requested documentation.
- The student has made a false declaration in their funding application or in any other related process; and/or

- An error has been made in the assessment or calculation of the student's award.

If this does occur, the Student Funding Team will notify the student to discuss the matter and arrange for repayment of any overpayment.

Overpayments will either be recovered from any future payments, or if the student is not eligible to receive any further payments, an invoice will be sent to recover the funds. Any outstanding balance with the college may prevent the student from attending any future courses and may also be referred to a debt collection agency.

Universal Credits (and Other Benefits)

If a student is in receipt of benefits when they start their course, or open a claim during their course, they must inform the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). DWP will then advise the student of what their eligibilities are.

This can mean the student remains on their benefit(s) while studying and will receive a funding award that is designed not to impact on their benefit payments. Or the student is to close their claim(s) to benefit(s) and will receive an appropriate funding award.

FE Bursary Maintenance and Housing funding are classed as Student Income, and as such must be declared as income to DWP.

Council Tax Exemption/Discounts

Full-time students who live alone, or who share their property with other students may be exempt from paying Council Tax for the duration of their course.

Students who live with non-students may be eligible for a Council Tax reduction for the duration of their course.

Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, and Stirling Councils are provided with a list of students at the start of the academic year (usually a few weeks into the course). This allows the council to verify a student's status. They may apply the relevant discount on the student's behalf, but it is advisable that any students contact their Local Authority to confirm.

Any students who are a late enrolment, or whose course starts after August 2023, should contact **student.records@forthvalley.ac.uk** to request a letter they can provide to their Local Authority.

Any students who are not resident in a Clackmannanshire, Falkirk or Stirling Council area, will require a Proof of Enrolment letter which can also be requested from **student.records@forthvalley.ac.uk** so they can provide it with their Local Authority.

Any other issues relating to Council Tax should be queried with the student's Local Authority.

SECTION 5 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND GLOSSARY

Assessable parent

This is a parent who will be assessed for contributions towards the student's support in situations where the student either:

- Lives in the parental home - the college should assess the parent who the student lives with. Where the student lives with both their parents, the college should assess the household income.

OR

- Does not live in the parental home - the college should assess the parent with whom the student most recently resided. Where the student lived with both parents, the college should assess the household income.

The definition of parent includes stepparents, partners of parents and guardians. If the assessable parent lives alone then this status should be supported by documentary evidence such as a Council Tax bill.

Care-Experienced/Care Leavers/Looked after Children & Young People

The FE Care-Experienced Bursary is available to Care-Experienced students who were subject to formal care interventions and were 'looked after' or are 'care leavers'. From AY 2022-23, the bursary has also been extended to students who were looked after in informal care arrangements with social work or local authority involvement. For more information on types of care experience which may make a student eligible for the Care Experienced Bursary, see the Care Experienced Students Guide.

Child/Children

For a person to be defined as a child for student support purposes they must be:

- Aged under 16.

OR

- Aged between 16 and 24 (inclusive) and still in education unless they can be defined as self-supporting.

It should be noted that, students under the age of 25 at the start of their course will still be the responsibility of an adult unless they are classified as self-supporting.

Parents' obligation to support children undergoing education or training up to the age of 25 is set out in **Section 1(5) (b) of the Family Law (Scotland) Act 1985** (this covers both fees and student support).

Parent/parental

A parent is an adult on whom the student is "in practice" dependent. It therefore includes stepparents, partners of parents and guardians.

Parental home

This is the home of the assessable parent(s).

Partner

For assessment purposes a Partner is a husband, wife, civil partner, or partner (of an established relationship) of a student or their parent.

Statutory school leaving date

45. As defined in the **Education (Scotland) Act 1980**, the dates at which a person can leave school are pre-determined by when that person becomes 16 years of age. This means that a person is no longer of compulsory school age from:

- Summer school leaving date (that is the last day in May), if they reach 16 years of age on or after 1 March but before the following 1 October. OR
- Winter school leaving date (that is the first day of the Christmas holidays or 21 December for non-attendees), if they reach 16 years of age on or after 1 October but before the following 1 March.

Unearned income

- Includes, but is not restricted to:
- Unemployment/social security benefits which provide a replacement income, including state pension, pension credit and allowances but excluding benefits for additional costs such as attendance allowance or child benefit.
- Private or employer's retirement pension.
- Profits from property, boarders, casual fees, etc.
- Interest paid from banks, building societies, dividends, etc.
- Trust funds.
- Working tax credit but not any elements paid in respect of childcare or disability.

Universal Credit

This benefit has been gradually rolled-out across Scotland to replace six other benefits (Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support and Housing Benefit), although some people will remain on these 'legacy benefits.' Some students (primarily those who are disabled and/or who have children and/or young people estranged from their parents) may be eligible for student support whilst receiving Universal Credit. For more information see our Universal Credit Students Guide.

MAKING LEARNING WORK



www.forthvalley.ac.uk

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Information contained within this document was correct at time of publishing, but may be subject to change. CM094