

FINANCIAL CONTINGENCY FUNDS POLICY

Prepared by:	Head of Learner Services		
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Preamble to the Policy

Equal Opportunities

The College shall comply with all statutory duties in respect of equal opportunities in the areas of sex, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, transgender religion, belief and the rehabilitation of offenders. The college shall also comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and any subsequent enactments or modifications.

1. Purpose

1.1 The Assembly Government allocates the Financial Contingency Fund (FCF) to all Colleges for the purpose of providing additional financial support to European Community learners. The FCFs are limited and each application will be considered on an individual basis to ensure fair and effective distribution of the funds. The College is governed by various instructions from DELLS on the use and management of FCF. The College policy may need to vary to take account of these instructions without a full redrafting of this policy.

The funds will be disbursed on the system described below.

- 1.2.1 The FCF needs also to be considered alongside the Assembly Learning Grant (ALG) which is available for learners aged 19 years and over who meet certain criteria, mainly financial. The college staff can advise learners on these grants which are administered by the Student Loans Company (SLC).
- 1.2.2 The Educational Maintenance Allowance which is available to learners aged 16, 17 and 18.

2. When to apply

- 2.1 The application forms will be available when a learner decides to join a course. The College aims to distribute application forms during the admissions process in order to inform decision making as early as possible.
- 2.2 Learners are entitled to apply at any time during their study at Coleg Morgannwg or any of its community based centres.
- 2.3 Usually only one application will be necessary. Additional applications may be made if circumstances change.

- 2.4 The time scale for processing applications is normally 4 weeks after receipt of application and it will be approximately 2 weeks before the College replies.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 To be eligible for support from the FCF a learner must fulfil the following criteria:
- (i) Full time/part time (normally residing in the UK for 3 years preceding the start of the course) learner.
 - (ii) Be an EU national with migrant worker status or be a refugee or
 - (iii) Have been granted exceptional leave to remain and satisfied the 3 years residency requirements or
 - (iv) Be an enrolled learner at any centre.
 - (v) Be a national of the European community; have been resident in the EU for 3 years preceding the start of the course.

4. Payments

- 4.1 Learners who qualify for a bursary type award/grant will receive payment in the form of a cheque or BACS transfer. The learner will normally need a bank/building society account, for it to be cleared.
- 4.2 Any queries regarding the actual payment of funds should be directed to the grant officer in Campus Services.
- 4.3 Payments for goods and services for an individual may be direct to the supplier.

5. Appeals

- 5.1 Appeals must be in writing to the Learner Services Officer setting out the reason for the appeal with any additional supporting evidence.
- 5.2 An appeal will need to be made within 14 days of the disputed decision.

6. Use of the funds

- 6.1 The overall fund is subdivided into categories to tackle areas where the need for financial support has been identified as an aid to overcoming barriers to study.
- 6.2 There is support for materials, equipment etc, childcare, transport, free meals and hardship payments.

7. Guidance notes for completing the bursary application form

- 7.1 Eligibility and amount to be awarded will be based on the income levels determined by the assessment of the application form.
- 7.2 Applicants must complete all sections of the FCF form and return as soon as possible to Campus Services. This is very important as the funds are allocated on a first come first served basis.
- 7.3 If the forms are not fully completed they will be returned and this could cause delay. If a learner wants to discuss how to complete the form, he/she can obtain help from Campus Services.

8. FCF criteria for bursaries

- 8.1 All learners are invited to apply for funds from the FCF Account. However, learners who are able to obtain ALGs or EMA will only be considered for transport and childcare help unless there are other exceptional needs.
- 8.2 Learners not able to attain financial assistance from the FCF may be able to appeal to the Hardship Fund Committee for further assessment.
- 8.3 Priority is given to learners who have been/are in care, dependent family members with two or more children in full time education, JSA/Income Support and Working Families Tax Credit.

9. Declaration

- 9.1 All applicants must complete the declaration.
- 9.2 The learner /parent /guardian must read and sign the declaration giving accurate and complete information.
- 9.3 Campus Services must be informed of any change in circumstances.
- 9.4 Applicants must be agreeable to any investigation being made to verify the accuracy of the information given.
- 9.5 The applicant must repay the amount awarded if the information is subsequently based on inaccurate information

- 9.6 Proof must be supplied if the applicant is in receipt of JSA /Income Support. This must be provided by either taking the form to be stamped at the benefit office or by provide proof at the College or center of education.

10. Home to College Transport

- 10.1 Transport is one of the main barriers to getting to colleges. In recognition of this the College uses the FCF to supplement the transport provided by Borough Councils. The fund can be used to provide contract buses, season tickets or travel grants dependent on an individual's needs. Certain areas suffering higher deprivation will have contract buses provided from the FCF.

11. Childcare

- 11.1 An amount of fund is set aside to support parents with a need for childcare. Each case is assessed individually and the amount of support varies with the claimants financial circumstances. All learners will be expected to make some contribution to costs.

12. Meal subsidy

- 12.1 The College provides a meal voucher to learners under19 who fall within certain financial criteria. The voucher is for use in college canteens.

13. Hardship

- 13.1 To recognise that not all problems are covered by the above the College will have a fund which can be applied flexibly. Hardship funds will only be used after all other avenues are exhausted. Payment may be issued after considering a written application and/or by recommendation of a College welfare officer. The Learner Services Officer will be presented with the evidence and decide on an appropriate payment.

14. Management of FCF

- 14.1 The Learner Services Officer shall develop appropriate polices and procedures for FCF and be advised by an College Grants Team, which he/she chairs. The team has the duty of developing working practices and making decisions on the disbursement of FCF in line with this policy.
- 14.2 The Learner Services Officer has the authority to make decisions for discretionary payments to learners based on written evidence and up to a maximum of £500.

The Grants team can agree discretionary payments up to £1000. Larger payments must be approved by the Principal.

15. Amendments

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years by the Learner Services Officer and any recommendations shall be considered for approval by the Strategic Management Team.