

# ****Finance Policy****

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| POLICY AND PROCEDURE | **Fee Waiver Policy** |
| VERSION NUMBER | **2.0** |
| APPROVING COMMITTEE | **Senior Management Team** |
| DATE OF APPROVAL  | **1 August 2015** |
| EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT  | **7 July 2015** |
| REVIEW DATE | **31 July 2016** |
| RESPONSIBLE PERSON  | **Director of Finance and Estates** |

# West College Scotland

# Fee Waiver Policy

Part-time Further and Higher Education Students

West College Scotland supports the principle of Lifelong Learning. To assist students who may be financially disadvantaged, the College operates a Fee Waiver Policy that allows certain categories of student to have their fees waived. Each course of study must be sumable and fundable.

**Each student must complete a fee waiver form on commencement of their course, and provide evidence of the benefit in receipt for each course of study. Each application will be dependent upon certain criteria being met. If your application is unsuccessful, you will be expected to fund your course. The College operates a system that allows course fees to be spread across a period of time and details of this scheme are available at the Finance Office.**

## Eligibility Criteria

A student satisfies the criteria if:

1. Full-time further education programme for whom credits can be claimed.
2. Further Education Students for whom credits can be claimed with learning difficulties or disabilities on courses classified in programme group 18.
3. They are studying a part-time further education course or a part-time credit-bearing programme of study at higher education level.
4. School pupils undertaking college activity that form part of their school curriculum.
5. The student or student’s family are in receipt of either:

 A Income Support

Working Tax Credit

 Pension Credit

 Income based Job Seekers Allowance

 Income Related Employment & Support Allowance (ESA)

 Housing Benefit

 Universal Credit

B Where the student is in receipt of:

Carers’ Allowance (or carers who have an underlying entitlement to Carers Allowance but gave up the allowance to e.g. claim their pension)

 Disability Living Allowance

Severe Disablement Allowance

Attendance Allowance

Incapacity Benefit

Contributory Employment & Support Allowance (ESA)

Personal Independence payment

C Where the taxable incomes of the student’s family in the previous financial year (2014/2015) is equivalent to or lower than the threshold below:

Households with only one person £ 8,282

 Households of a couple no children £12,395

 Households with dependent Children £18,977

**If there has been a material reduction in income from the previous financial tax year the current taxable income in the current financial tax year can be assessed**

D Where the student is a person, or the spouse or child of a person whom is an asylum seeker living in Scotland (defined in the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999) on either an ESOL course (full-time or part-time) or another part-time higher education or part-time further education course

E The student is in the care of a local authority and is living in a foster or children’s home, regardless of the age of that student

1. *Students*, who are non-UK EU nationals, or the child of a non-UK EU national, are eligible to apply for:
* Fee and Student support in HE
* Fee Waiver in FE **provided** they are ordinarily resident in Scotland on the first day of the first academic year of the course, and have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands or EEA countries for the preceding 3-year period.

(No fee waiver will be granted if the sole purpose of being in the UK is to receive) an education.)

1. There is no upper or lower age limit on students eligibility for fee waiver grant
2. The fee waiver policy only refers to course and exam fees attached to the course of study, if the course attendance is satisfactory. The student must meet all additional costs.
3. Children of Asylum Seekers. Such individuals, satisfying following criteria, will be eligible for tuition fee support to study full and part-time Higher and Further Education course in Scotland.

The criteria to meet eligibility are that the individual:

* Is resident in Scotland and is under 25 years old on 1 August, 1 January, 1 April or 1 July – whichever is closest to the beginning of the first term of the person’s course.
* Has been resident in Scotland for a minimum period of 3 years; and
* Was under 18 years old on the date when the asylum application was made (this application having been made prior to 31 December 2006)
1. Student’s takes 2 or more part time course will be eligible for a maximum of one full-time fee waiver, i.e. £1008 or £1285 depending on level of study.
2. Fee waiver grant cannot be used for any student being supported through the Ministry of Defence service veteran’s scheme.



**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**Name of policy/procedure/decision:**

Fee Waiver Policy

**Provide a brief summary of the aims of the policy/procedure/decision and main activities:**

This Policy has been developed to assist students who may be financially disadvantaged by allowing certain categories of student to have their fees waived. The Policy sets out the eligibility criteria and describes the application process.

**Assessed By:** Clare Fraser **Date:** 7 July 2015

**This stage establishes whether a policy, procedure or decision will have a differential impact from an equality perspective on people who share protected characteristics or whether it is “equality neutral” (i.e. have no effect either positive or negative).**

**1.** Who will benefit from this Policy (students/staff/stakeholders)?

Potentially, this Policy should benefit all students who meet the criteria. There are particular benefits for people who share protected characteristics. There is often a link between lower income and equality groups. For example, people with a disability are twice as likely to live in poverty as others.

Students with disabilities are covered by the waiver, as are part time students (there is a higher proportion of part time female students than male). Students in receipt of Carer’s Allowance or Attendance Allowance are also included, which should impact positively on females as more carers are female. Ethnic minority students who are asylum seekers, or their spouses/children, should also benefit from the Policy.

**2.** Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people who share protected characteristics? If so, who may be affected and why? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”?

There is no indication that this Policy will result in a negative impact on people who share protected characteristics. The criteria which is used is objective and is based on the Scottish Funding Council approach. The Policy states that there is no upper or lower age limit on students’ eligibility. The previous section notes that there are particular benefits from some groups who share protected characteristics.

**3.** What action will you take to ensure that you are monitoring the impact of this Policy?

The equality impact of this Policy will be monitored using the policy review process. Any complaints or grievances raised about the application of this Policy will be reviewed also.