

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| POLICY AND PROCEDURE | Fee Waiver Policy 2018-19 |
| VERSION NUMBER | 1 |
| APPROVING COMMITTEE | Senior Management Team |
| DATE OF APPROVAL | |
| EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT | 7 July 2015 |
| REVIEW DATE | May 2018 |
| RESPONSIBLE PERSON | Director of Finance and Estates |

History of Amendments

| Date | Version/Page/Sections/Affected | Summary of Changes |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Contents

| Index: | Page: |
|---|--------------|
| Policy Statement | 4 |
| Equality Statement | 4 |
| Eligible Students | 4 |
| Eligible Status | 5 |
| Children of Asylum Seekers | 5 |
| Responsibilities and Assessment | 6 |
| Appendix A – Chart of Eligibility | 7 |
| Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment | 8 |

1 Policy Statement

West College Scotland supports the principle of Lifelong Learning. To assist students who may be financially disadvantaged, the College operates a Fee Waiver Policy in line with the Scottish Funding Council current policy guidance (SFC/GD/07/2018 – Fee Waiver grant policy 2018-19), which allows certain categories of student to have their fees waived. Each course of study must be fundable and attract credits.

2 Equality Statement

The College is committed to providing equal opportunities to ensure all students, staff, customers and visitors are treated equally regardless of gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; disability; age; marital status or civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; sexual orientation; sex.

3 Eligible students

The following categories of students may use fee waiver grant subject to meeting the eligible status detailed within this policy:

- a) Further Education (FE) students following a full time non-advanced programme for whom credits can be claimed.
- b) FE Students for whom credits can be claimed with learning difficulties or disabilities on courses classified in price group 5.
- c) Students for whom credits can be claimed who satisfy the criteria in the Student Activity Data Guidance (issued by SFC) who and are studying either:
 - a part-time FE programme; or
 - a part-time HE programme equivalent to at least SCQF level 7.
- d) School pupils undertaking college activity that form part of their school-based curriculum.
- e) Privately or home educated school pupils on a means tested basis.
- f) Other students under the age of 16 completing any above activity out-with their school-based curriculum on a means tested basis.

Fees for full-time advanced courses are assessed and paid, if eligible, by SAAS. Fees for these courses are therefore not included in this fee waiver policy.

4 Eligible Status

The burden of proof is on the student to satisfy the college with evidence of their eligibility status. If the student's circumstances change during the course so that the student becomes eligible when they were not previously, the student must notify the college before the 'required date' which, for 2018-19 is:

- 1 November for full-time courses starting in the summer session
- The date on which 25% of the course duration in days has elapsed for other FT and PT courses.

There is no upper or lower age limit on students eligibility for fee waiver grant.

For the purpose of means-testing eligibility of a student the following criteria must be met.

a) The student or student's family are in receipt of either:

Income Support
Working Tax Credit
Pension Credit
Income based Job Seekers Allowance
Income Related Employment & Support Allowance (ESA)
Housing Benefit
Universal Credit

b) Or the student is in receipt of:

Carer's Allowance (or carers who have an 'underlying entitlement' to Carer's Allowance but gave up the allowance to e.g. claim their pension), Carer's Allowance Supplement or the Young Carer's Grant
Disability Living Allowance
Attendance Allowance
Incapacity Benefit
Contributory Employment & Support Allowance (ESA)
Personal Independence payment

c) Or the taxable income of the student's family in the previous financial year (2017/18) 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 taxable income of the student's family in the current financial tax year can be assessed

- d) Or the student is a person, or the spouse or child of a person whom is an asylum seeker living in Scotland (defined in section 18 of the Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act 2002) See further notes on 'Section 5 Children of Asylum Seekers' below.
- e) Or the student is under 26 and care experienced. This is defined as looked after and in the care of a local authority and can include situations where the student is living in a foster home, children's home, residential home, in kinship care or in the care of the local authority in their own home.

5 Children of Asylum Seekers

With reference to 4d) above, the further criteria to meet eligibility are that:

- the students asylum application (their own or their family application) must have been made prior to the end of 2006; and
- was under 18 years old on the date when the asylum application was made; and
- has been resident in Scotland for a minimum period of 3 years; and
- is under 25 years old on 1 August, 1 January, 1 April or 1 July closest to the beginning of the first term of the course; and
- is resident in Scotland on 1 August, 1 January, 1 April or 1 July closest to the beginning of the first term of the course

6 Responsibilities and Assessment

Where a student has chosen the Fee Waiver option on their course Enrolment Form, they must then complete a Fee Waiver Form and provide evidence of the benefits they are in receipt of for each course of study.

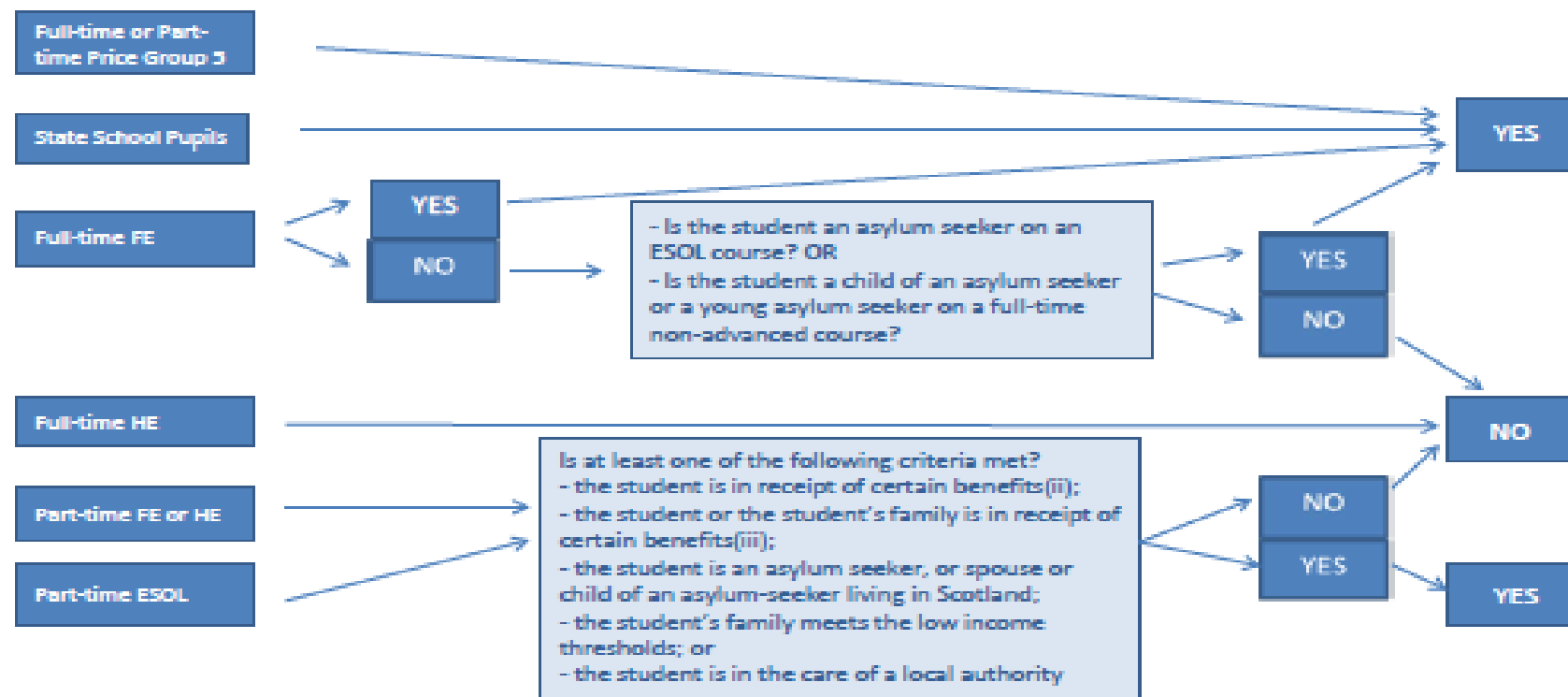
Each application will be assessed to ensure the criteria set out in the SFC Fee Waiver policy, adopted by the college in this document, meets the necessary criteria. Students whose applications are successful will not need to fund the course fee.

Where it is assessed that an application is unsuccessful, the student will be advised that they need to fund the 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 campus finance offices and in the Fee Policy.

Eligibility for fee waiver grant

Annex A

Note: This chart does not replace the policy and is to be used as a tool only. When claiming fee waiver grant from the SFC, colleges must meet all the requirements in the policy in its entirety.



(i) When undertaking college activities that form part of their school-based curriculum. In exceptional circumstances, the college may waive the fees of privately or home educated pupils even if means-testing would otherwise rule them out. See the policy for further information.

(ii) Carer's Allowances, Disability Living Allowance, Severe Disablement Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, PIP and contributory ESA.

(iii) Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Pension Credit, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Housing Benefit Income-related ESA and UC.

(iv) Students who are non-asylum seekers living in Scotland on a part-time ESOL course and their main purpose for being in the EU is not to receive education, may be eligible.

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.