

Policy & Procedure	Fee Waiver
Policy Area	Finance
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Approving Committee	SMT
Date of Approval	July 2020
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Date of Next Review	July 2021
Responsible Senior Manager	Director of Finance and Estates

History of Amendments

Date	Version/Pages/Sections Affected	Summary of changes

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/09/2020 – Fee Waiver grant policy 2020-21), which allows certain categories of student to have their fees waived. Each course of study must be fundable and attract credits.

Equality Statement

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

Please note this document is available in other formats, to request another format please email info@wcs.ac.uk

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1. Eligible Students

The following categories of students may use a 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 SFC credits can be claimed.
- b) FE Students for whom SFC credits can be claimed with learning difficulties or disabilities on courses classified in price group 5.
- c) Students for whom SFC credits can be claimed who satisfy the criteria in the SFC Student Activity Data Guidance 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 subject to the College Fee Waiver Policy.

2. 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 their course so that the student becomes eligible when they were not previously, the student must notify the College before the 'required date' which, for 2020-21 is:

- 1 November for full-time courses starting in the summer session; or
- 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 student's 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
- Pensions 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) The taxable income of the student's family in the previous financial year (2019/20) 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) 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) 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.

3. Children of Asylum Seekers

With reference to 2(d) above, the further criteria to meet eligibility are that:

- the student's 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

4. 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 their course fee.

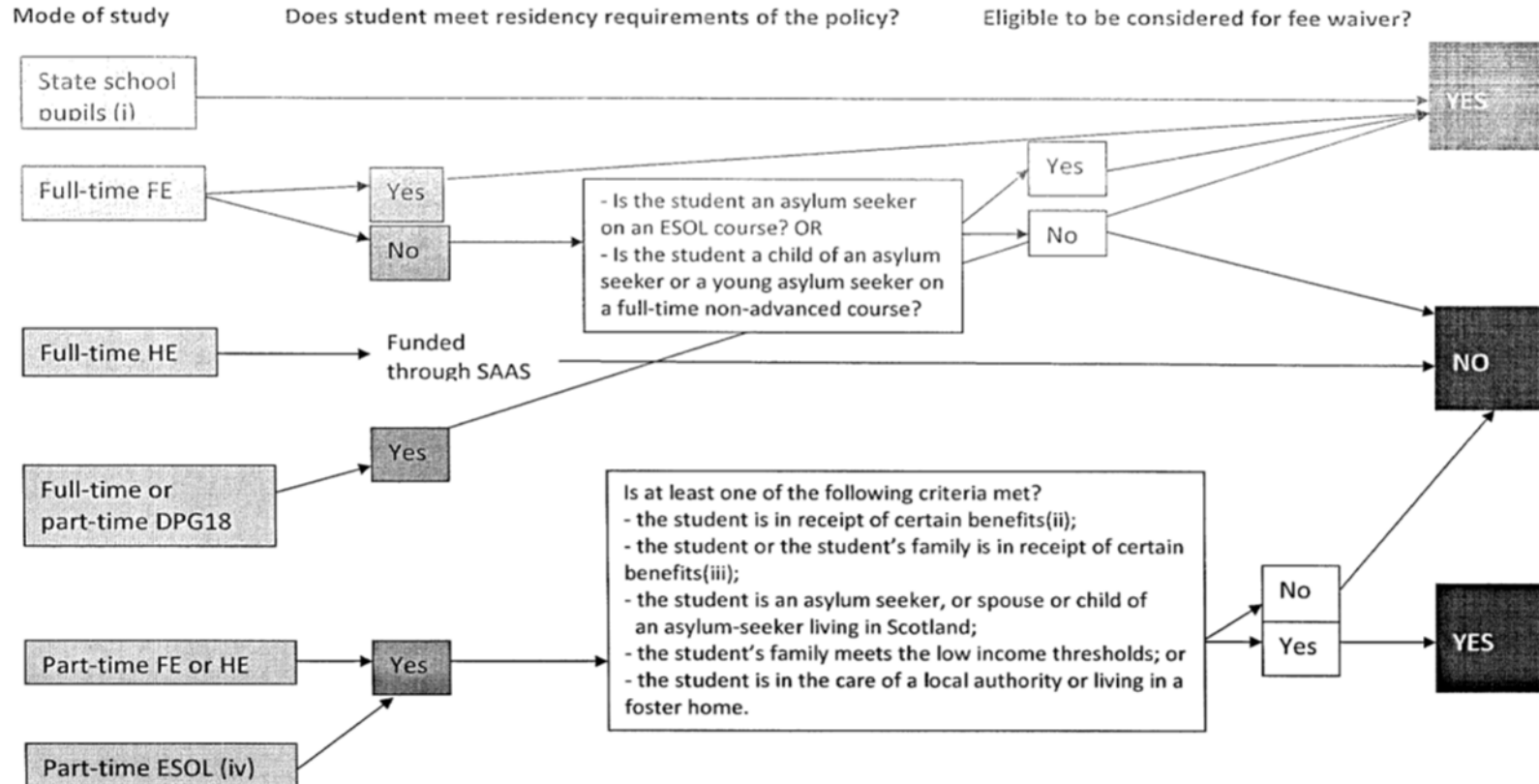
Where an application is unsuccessful, the student will be advised that they need to pay their own tuition fees. The College operates a system that allows course fees to be spread across the academic year and details of this scheme are available at campus finance offices and in the College Fee Policy.

Chart of Eligibility

APPENDIX A

Eligibility for fee waiver grant

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 Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Severe Disablement Allowance, Attendance Allowance or Incapacity Benefit.
- (iii) Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Pension Credit, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance or Housing Benefit.
- (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 for a fee waiver grant.

Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy/procedure/decision: Fee Waiver

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

This Policy allows certain categories of students who may be financially disadvantaged to have their fees waived in line with the Scottish Funding Council current policy guidance.

Assessed By: Clare Fraser

Date: 20 July 2020

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).

The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

1. Who will benefit from this (students/staff/stakeholders)? Is there likely to be a positive impact on people who share protected characteristics, and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”? i.e. will not have a differential impact on any equality group/s?

Protected groups are more likely to suffer financial disadvantage. For example, people with a disability face economic barriers, and asylum seekers have comparatively limited options in terms of seeking work. This Policy should therefore assist financially disadvantaged groups who may not otherwise have been able to enrol on a course in further education. Attainment could also assist them in gaining employment or in gaining citizenship skills which should also have a positive impact.

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”?

It is not anticipated that an adverse impact will occur. The College will provide support for those who require it in the implementation of this Policy and in the application and enrolment process.

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

Student equality data regarding applications, attainment and retention is collected and analysed, and used to inform action planning.