

STUDENT ENTITLEMENT POLICY

Approved by: Staff and Student Operations

11th May 2010

Student Entitlement Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Coleg Llandrillo recognises the importance of providing information, advice and guidance to students to help them make the right choice and to fulfil their potential. The purpose of this Student Entitlement Policy is to raise awareness of a range of welfare and financial support that is available to eligible students studying at all Coleg Llandrillo sites.

1.2 The Student Services team offer a discrete, student centred approach tailored to suit the needs of the individual. Assistance is available to students that have questions relating to student fees or loans and those that require help with budgeting. The College has a range of financial support that eligible students can access to help pay towards costs incurred whilst studying.

2. Financial Contingency Fund

2.1 The Financial Contingency Fund (FCF) is intended to provide support to students in cases where a financial need is established. Payments are made according to individual students' need.

2.2 Applications will be considered in accordance with the current national guidance 'Student Support Arrangements' as issued by the Welsh Assembly Government and the eligibility criteria as set by Coleg Llandrillo.

2.3 Coleg Llandrillo FCF allocation is used to support requests for financial assistance with Childcare, General Equipment, Transport, Accommodation and Educational Trips. These costs have been identified as the main barriers to low income students accessing further education and training.

2.4 Each Academic Year Coleg Llandrillo's Executive Management Team will determine the amount of FCF that will be ring fenced to support progression of students enrolling on Community provision in Terms 2 and 3.

3. Administration of the FCF

3.1 The Vice Principal – Staff & Student Operations, Director of Student, and the Assistant Director of Finance make up the FCF administrative steering group with responsibility for reviewing the Student Entitlement Policy to ensure that it is compliant with the national guidance.

3.2 The Student Advisors and Student Welfare Officers, located at all College sites, undertake the operational administration of the FCF supported by Finance Assistants.

3.3 Students must complete an application form to access the FCF.

3.4 Where applicable, students must return the completed FCF form with the relevant supporting documents by the date indicated on the application form. If no submission date is indicated, applications will be considered on a first come first served basis. Applications will continue to be accepted but not considered after the total FCF award has been allocated to students.

3.5 Coleg Llandrillo has an established Student Financial Contingency Fund Appeals Procedure. Students wishing to appeal against a decision not to award them financial assistance must do so in writing and send to the Director, Student Experience. The Director, Student Experience will oversee the FCF appeals panel which will normally include the Assistant Director of Finance, a senior manager and a member of the Student Experience team who was not involved in the original decision. Depending on the circumstances and within 5 working days of receipt of the written appeal, the Director, Student Experience may contact the student for further information and or clarification. The appeal will be held and a response given to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal. The decision of the appeal panel is final. The student is liable for any costs incurred if the appeal is unsuccessful. Further information is available on the college Website and intranet and is also available from the Student Advisors located at all College sites.

4. FCF Eligibility

4.1 Completion of an FCF application form does not guarantee that a student will be awarded financial assistance.

4.2 The Financial Contingency Fund (FCF) is open to full and part time further education students aged 16 or over that have lived in the UK for at least three years. Students under the age of 16 are not eligible to receive FCF and should contact their Local Education Authority for assistance.

4.3 Students who reach the age of 20 before they complete their full time A Levels or other FE course and face particular financial hardship because their families will cease to receive child benefit and dependency additions in Social Security benefits or tax credits can apply for FCF assistance during the academic year of their 20th birthday.

4.4 Applications to the Childcare, Transport or General Costs FCF will not normally be considered from students that can not demonstrate clear progression i.e. students that have studied any other course at the same level in the previous year or are repeating a year of study.

4.5 Eligible students in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) can also apply for FCF support for Childcare, General costs and Transport. Eligible students in receipt of Assembly Learning Grant (ALG (FE)) can only apply to the Childcare Costs FCF.

4.6 The amount awarded from an EMA or ALG will be taken into account when considering support from other funds. Where appropriate Student Advisors / Student Welfare Officers will direct students to other sources of funding if the student has not yet applied before considering their application from the FCF.

4.7 FCF Applications are assessed against household income levels.

4.8 For the purpose of administering FCF, a student may be defined as Independent if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Aged 21 or over
- Have a family of their own, e.g. spouse, civil partner, co-habit or have children
- Live on their own and are fully and financially self supported
- Have Looked after Child status
- Have no living parents

4.9 For the purpose of administering FCF, a student may be defined as Dependent if they are under 21 years old and / or live with a parent, step-parent, family member or legal guardian.

4.10 When calculating entitlement, the following sources of income will be taken into account:

- Salaries and Wages
- Self-Employment Income
- Child Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Unearned income such as income from property, investments, dividends or interest from capital
- Pension Income
- Working Tax Credit
- Taxable Social Security Benefits
- Disability Living Allowance

4.11 Students are expected to provide evidence of all income that contributes towards the household income. This includes parents, legal guardians, spouse or partner.

4.12 Students are expected to provide evidence of the household income by providing the relevant documentary evidence. This may include:

- 3 months most recent bank statements
- P45
- Employer's Certificate (form A)
- DLA Award Notice
- Tax Credit Award Notice
- ALG (FE) Award Letter
- A current Income Support Benefits statement
- P60
- Accountants Letter or SA302
- Annual Pension Statement or Pension P60
- EMA Award Letter

4.13 To ensure parity with other national student financial awards, Coleg Llandrillo will use the following Awards Table as a guideline for determining support:

Gross Household Income Band	Award Structure
From £0.00 to £21,885	90% assistance
From £21,886 to £26,840	70% assistance
From £26,841 to £32,400	50% assistance
Income at or above £32,401	Not eligible under normal circumstances

Correct as at March 2010

Further consideration may be given to applicants where the household income is above the threshold and is made up entirely of benefits.

4.14 Certain categories of students are unable to apply to the FCF for assistance. They are:

- International fee paying students
- EU students that have not lived in the UK / Wales for the last three years
- Higher Education students including Teacher Training
- Students on distance learning courses
- Students on Work Based Learning Programmes such as Foundation Modern Apprenticeship and Modern Apprenticeship
- Work Based Learning for Adults
- Skill Build / Skill Build Plus
- Construction Industry Training Board students

4.15 Coleg Llandrillo retains the right to attribute additional conditions of eligibility to each FCF category in accordance with the national guidance and College strategic priorities.

5. Childcare FCF

5.1 Students will be awarded Childcare FCF for the length of their programme. Without exception, students must apply to the Childcare FCF each year of study.

5.2 Students with family members within the household who could care for the child(ren) will not be considered.

5.3 Applicants with a partner/spouse currently studying or in training and in receipt of a childcare element in their funding will not be eligible to receive support from the Childcare FCF.

5.4 All applicants must demonstrate appropriate progression in the level of study. Assistance will not normally be provided if a student has not successfully completed a previous qualification at the College or is repeating the year to improve their overall grade.

5.5 Contributions to eligible students will be made in accordance with the Awards Table in 4.13

5.6 Applications for childcare costs can normally be made for a maximum of 2 children.

5.7 For designated College holiday periods and where the provider charges costs, the College will contribute half of the allocated award i.e. 50% of 90% or 70% or 50%. Students are responsible to pay the balance.

5.8 Payments are made direct to the registered childcare provider. Coleg Llandrillo's responsibility is restricted to that of a 3rd party contributor.

5.9 Students must maintain at least 80% attendance to continue to receive childcare FCF. Attendance is monitored each term. Financial support will be withdrawn if attendance falls below 80%.

5.10 Should a student withdraw before the end of the academic year without giving notice to the childcare provider, the College will pay 2 weeks extra in lieu of notice. Additional notice period charges will be the responsibility of the student.

6. General Costs FCF

6.1 The General Costs FCF provides assistance with on course costs such as books, equipment, materials, specialist clothing and footwear, examination (excluding resits), registration charges and work experience costs and essential trips.

6.2 Students aged 19 and over and are eligible for the Assembly Learning Grant are not normally eligible for support for direct on-course costs. However, discretionary funding may be available and students should seek further guidance from a Student Advisor/ Student Welfare Officer.

6.3 Wherever possible Coleg Llandrillo will seek to purchase the goods on behalf of the students through our agreed procurement and internal transfer procedures. This may be via direct procurement with a supplier, through College shops, College Travel Office or the College Libraries.

6.4 The Director, Student Experience will liaise with each Programme Manager and Curriculum Area Director to determine the essential items for each course. Only agreed items can be supported via the General Costs FCF. This may include a contribution towards agreed educational trips.

6.5 Normally, a maximum of £350 can be claimed by each student from the General Costs FCF.

6.6 Pathway to Apprenticeship (PTA) students can not apply to the General Costs FCF for materials and equipment that are provided to them as part of their PTA toolkit.

6.7 All equipment purchased with financial assistance will remain the property of the College. Students who do not successfully complete their qualifications will be asked to return equipment and materials with a value of more than £50.

6.8 Course Fees, deposits or College fines accrued whilst studying can not be paid for from FCF.

7. Accommodation FCF

7.1 Students enrolled on full time courses that require hostel accommodation at the Glynllifon site may apply for Accommodation FCF.

7.2 Support for accommodation costs for students eligible as described in 7.1 will be made in accordance with the eligibility criteria detailed in section 4 of this policy.

7.3 Students must maintain at least 90% attendance to continue to receive Accommodation FCF. Attendance of all Accommodation FCF applicants will be reviewed each term.

7.4 Where there are exceptional circumstances, other requests for FCF assistance towards accommodation costs may be considered for students aged 16 to 19.

8. Transport FCF

8.1 Full-time further education students under the age of 19 who live in the county boroughs of Conwy, Gwynedd or Denbighshire and live over three miles from the College site they attend will be eligible for two journeys on College transport or a travel pass between the closest bus/train stop to their primary residence and their main College site.

8.2 Full-time further education students under the age of 19 who live in the county boroughs of Ynys Mon or Flintshire should apply directly to their Local Education Authority for funding of transport costs. Further information on the Student Transport Policy is available on the College website, intranet and from the College's Transport Co-ordinator and Student Advisors.

8.3 Full-time students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities living in the county boroughs of Conwy, Gwynedd or Denbighshire aged under 19 who require transport other than College buses or bus pass, or as a feeder to a designated pick up point on a college transport route will not be charged for home to College transport including taxi fees where this is required in order for them to access College sites. In accordance with the Student Transport Policy, all students must complete a Transport FCF application.

8.4 Wherever possible taxi services will be pooled.

8.5 Full time and part time students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged over 19 and living in Conwy, Gwynedd or Denbighshire who require transport to access College sites will be asked to contribute a maximum of £50 per term towards transport costs. All students must complete a Transport FCF application form. Applications made by students living in all other counties will be considered by the Transport Panel.

8.6 Full time and part time students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged over 19 who are in receipt of the higher rate of mobility allowance will not be eligible for funding of transport costs.

8.7 Where a full time course is only offered at one Coleg Llandrillo site, students aged under 19 who live more than 3 miles away can apply to the Transport FCF for assistance towards travel costs if College transport is not available from the students' primary residence to the College site. The eligibility criteria outlined in section 4 will apply. The College Transport Panel will determine and provide the most cost effective transport option.

8.8 Students in receipt of Childcare FCF who can not travel on College transport may also apply to the Transport FCF.

8.9 The College will contribute up to a maximum of £10 a week to support students under the age of 19, with an annual household income of less than £21,885.00 and travelling more than 3 miles to attend work experience.

8.10 Where there is capacity on College transport, Higher Education students studying at any College site can purchase a college travel pass for £50 per term.

9. Student Welfare

9.1 Support is available to students who may be experiencing severe personal, emotional and or welfare difficulties. Students can contact the Student Welfare Co-ordinator or a Student Advisor to discuss their individual circumstances. Concerned Personal and Course Tutors can also refer students to the Student Welfare Co-ordinator, Student Mentors Student Advisor or Student Welfare Officer.

9.2 The Student Welfare Co-ordinator will determine the most appropriate support based on the information disclosed. This may include referral to a College Counsellor, Student Mentor or to an external agency.

9.3 Students referred to a College Counsellor will initially receive a maximum of six confidential and private sessions. All students that access the counselling service will be given a confidentiality and consent form outlining College procedures. The need of each student is reviewed following the sixth session to determine what further support may be required.

9.4 The Student Welfare Co-ordinator and Student Advisors / Student Welfare Officers will ensure that Looked after Children are made aware of their full entitlement whilst studying at Coleg Llandrillo.

9.5 Discreet and individually tailored support will be provided to support students who may be referred to College from the Youth Offending Team and Probation Service.

9.6 The College also provides a mediation service between homeless students and the relevant social service, educational and housing agencies.

10. Course and Careers Guidance

10.1 Impartial, information, guidance and support about current and future study options is available to all students. Student Advisors can produce a Learning Pathway that details the qualifications and programmes of study required by the student to achieve their career aspirations.

10.2 Support is also provided for students and post-graduates seeking work experience opportunities. The College actively promotes the Erasmus scheme that provides HE students with an opportunity to study modules and gain credits at other institutions within the EU. Further and detailed information is available from the Student Advisors.

10.3 Independent and confidential careers advice is also provided in partnership with Careers Wales officers. Students should contact the Student Services Manager or Student Advisors to arrange an appointment.

10.4 Coleg Llandrillo recognises the importance of supporting students to realise their ambitions. The student Services Manager and Student Advisors provide assistance to students who require support in writing a CV, completing an UCAS or job application form, improving their interview techniques or writing a personal action plan.