

## Access to Learning Fund – Guidance Notes 2009/10

Please read these guidance notes carefully before completing the form as if the form is incorrectly completed we will need to contact you and this will delay payment of any possible award.

Applications can be accepted throughout the academic year. However, the College receives a limited amount of money and whilst every effort is made to ensure that it remains available throughout the year (August 2009 – July 2010) this cannot be guaranteed. You are therefore encouraged to plan/review your budget early in your academic year so that, wherever possible, you can anticipate any difficulties and apply early.

Applicants are advised that payments from the Fund may have implications for their entitlement to Social Security benefits. If you require further information on the fund or you need any help completing the form please find our contact details at the end of these guidance notes.

### Eligibility

The Access to Learning Fund (ALF) is for home (UK) students\* registered on an undergraduate higher education course, either full time or part time. *\*A home student is defined as a student who meets certain residency conditions (the same conditions apply to eligibility for the UK Government student financial support). Usually this means you have an unrestricted right to enter and remain in the UK and you have been ordinarily resident in the UK for three years prior to the start of your course. None of this time must have been spent in the UK wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full time education. Please note that EU Students on a full time undergraduate course who are eligible for the tuition fee support only cannot apply to the Access to Learning Fund. Please contact us if you need further clarification as to whether you meet the residency rules.*

A **Full time course** is 120 credit points in an academic year or equivalent. To be eligible for ALF part time students must be on a **Part time course** which is at least 50% of a full time course unless you are a student with a disability which prevents you from studying at least 50% of a full time course. In such cases you may apply for ALF if you are studying at least 25% of a full time course.

### Priorities for Assistance

ALF exists to help eligible students who have a legitimate financial need. Unfortunately, as the fund is limited we cannot guarantee an award to all applicants and cannot normally meet all of the costs that an applicant might apply for. The Government asks us to give priority to the following groups of students when deciding how to allocate the funding.

For **full time undergraduate** students the priority groups are:

- Students with children (especially lone parents)
- Other mature students, especially those with existing financial commitments, including priority debts
- Students from low-income families
- Disabled students
- Care leavers
- Students from Foyers or who are homeless
- Students receiving the final year loan rate who are in financial difficulty (including those who are unable to work because of academic pressure)
- Students undertaking their first HE qualification

If you are not in one of the priority groups you can still apply but you must provide as much evidence as possible to show why you have a particular need.

You may apply more than once during an academic year for help from ALF but usually only if your circumstances have changed. You will be asked to write a letter of appeal and to provide documentary evidence of your change in circumstance.

### **Timetable for making a decision**

Provided your application form has been accurately completed and **all** the appropriate documentary evidence supplied, an assessment and decision should be made within **6 working weeks** of submission. If successful, you will normally receive payment of any award within this time frame. If it is not possible to deal with your application within this time frame (e.g. if we require additional information from you) we will keep you informed of the progress of your application and give an indication of when you will be informed of the outcome. All applicants receive written confirmation of the outcome of their application.

### **How to appeal**

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your application you should initially contact our HE Welfare and Finance Adviser to discuss your concerns. If after an explanation of the assessment you are still not satisfied and you feel

that there has been a procedural inconsistency you put the details of this in writing to the following address:

Student Funding Team  
Appeals Section  
Basford Hall Campus  
Stockhill Lane  
Nottingham  
NG6 0NB  
Tel: 0115 9166243

Please note that any appeal must be made within 4 weeks of the date of the letter you receive notifying you of the outcome of your application. All appeals are dealt with as priority by the Student Services Manager and Director of Students.

### **How to complete the application form**

It is essential that **all** necessary supporting documentation is enclosed with your application form. We cannot usually accept original documents so please supply legible photocopies. In certain circumstances you may be contacted separately by the Student Funding administrators and asked to supply relevant original documents. Applications that do not have supporting documents are **incomplete** and **cannot be processed**. These will be placed on hold until you provide such evidence; this will delay your application. Please complete all forms in black ink.

#### **Part 1: Your personal details**

Address – please put the address (including the postcode) that is to be used for written correspondence.

Email address – this will be used to contact you in the event of any queries relating to your application. If you would prefer to be contacted by post please ensure you indicate this on the form

#### **Part 2: Course details**

Complete all relevant sections.

#### **Part 3: Personal status/Accommodation**

Complete all relevant sections.

#### **Part 4: Your dependants**

Please give details of any children and/or adults who are financially dependent upon you.

#### **Part 5: Disability/Special medical needs**

Students with disabilities, especially those with dyslexia, may wish to apply for a preliminary diagnostic test, prior to applying for a Disabled Students

Allowance. Assistance in meeting this cost may be provided through Access to Learning Funds.

## **Part 6: Student's income**

### **Income/Expenditure**

Please include all essential expenditure. It is important that you fill in sections 6 and 7 as accurately as possible. Complete both Income and Expenditure sections. Please include estimated costs of any essential items that you feel you are currently unable to afford.

Please declare all income (including that from savings). If you are unsure which category any income should be listed under please include it under 'Other income' and specify the source.

### **Student Loan**

If eligible you must have applied for and taken out your full entitlement of student maintenance loan before receiving help from the Access to Learning Fund. If your parents have refused to complete a financial assessment form and you are therefore only able to take out the non means-tested element of the loan, this does not make you ineligible for ALF but further information may be required.

### **Bursaries/Scholarships/Trusts/Grants**

If you are in receipt of any of these sources of funding please include them with you application form.

### **Other income**

Please include any other income you have including savings and specify what that income is.

### **Partner's income**

If you have a partner (who is living with you) please indicate any income they have in this section.

## **Part 7: Student (and partner's) expenditure**

Include all household expenditure you and your partner (if applicable) have. If you have children you should include costs related to them as well. Please also include estimated costs of any essential items that you feel you are currently unable to afford.

When considering your application a set figure (as defined by HEFCE) will be used for certain elements of your expenditure (Food/Household/Laundry, Gas / Electricity / Water, Telephone, TV licence, Contents insurance, Council Tax).

This is known as **composite living costs** and the amount designated will depend upon your circumstances; weekly composite living cost figures for 09/10 are set at £66 single student, £104 student with partner, £76 for the first child and £58 for subsequent children.

### **Part 8: Supporting statement**

You are strongly advised to submit a supporting statement, explaining your reason(s) for applying, what you would like assistance with and detailing any additional information about your circumstances that you feel should be taken into consideration.

### **Part 9: Bank/Building Society details**

List **all** bank/building society account you hold. You must explain any credits/debits over £100. Please note failure to disclose all accounts that you hold may constitute a fraudulent application and disciplinary action may be taken by the College in such instances.

### **Declaration**

Please sign and date your application form.

### **Further Sources of Help / Information**

#### **Financial Support**

HE Welfare and Finance Adviser  
New College Nottingham  
Adams Building  
Stoney Street  
Nottingham  
NG1 1NG

Telephone: 0115 9104590

Email: [helen.lucas@ncn.ac.uk](mailto:helen.lucas@ncn.ac.uk)

Please contact **ncn's** dedicated HE Finance and Welfare Advisor if you have queries or concerns about sources of funding or managing your finances whilst at college.

#### **Students' Union**

**ncn** Student Union  
New College Nottingham  
Stockhill Lane  
Nottingham  
NG6 0NB

Telephone: 07518808587 or 07518808608

Email: [studentsunion@ncn.ac.uk](mailto:studentsunion@ncn.ac.uk)

**ncn** has a supportive Students' Union that students automatically join when they enrol. As part of the National Union of Students (NUS), the SU actively promotes students' needs and welfare within the college.

**Direct.gov.uk**

[www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)

Comprehensive information on all aspects of student finances

**Student Loans Company**

Telephone: 0845 026 2019

[www.slc.co.uk](http://www.slc.co.uk)

For information on Student Loans and payment dates.

**Educational Grants Advisory Service**

[www.family-action.org.uk/section.aspx?id=1037](http://www.family-action.org.uk/section.aspx?id=1037)

The Educational Grants Advisory Service (EGAS) offers guidance and advice on funding for those studying in post-16 education in the UK. EGAS operates nationally providing comprehensive advice and information on sources of funding available for post 16 education and training including loans, grants, benefits, access funds, hardship funds, bursaries and charitable trusts and services are provided free to individual students.