



South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

Higher Education Bursary & Financial Assistance Policy and Procedure 2021-22

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Approved by:	SLT
Date of Approval:	14/11/2019

MANDATORY INITIAL IMPACT SCREENING	
Completed by:	
Gavin Murray	
I have read the guidance document: Completing a Policy Impact Assessment?	✓
If this policy has been up-dated, please tick to confirm that the initial impact screening has also been reviewed:	✓



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	
Characteristic	This policy seeks to:
Age	Supports staff and learners to recognise and challenge discrimination on the grounds of age
Disability	Treat with equal dignity, all learners and staff; and monitor participation, performance and progress of learners and staff with disabilities and act to address inequalities.
Faith or Belief	No appreciable impact
Gender	No appreciable impact
Race or Ethnicity	Provide opportunities for the advancement of persons of minority race or ethnicity
Orientation	No appreciable impact
Gender reassignment	No appreciable impact
Economic disadvantage	Use available resources to identify and address any issues of inequality as a result of social and economic factors. Supporting learners and staff, both academically and pastorally in order for all to be successful
Rural isolation	No appreciable impact
Marriage	No appreciable impact
Pregnancy & maternity	No appreciable impact
Carers & care leavers	Use available resources to identify and address any issues of inequality as a result of being in care or a care leaver. Supporting learners both academically and pastorally in order to be successful.
Vulnerable persons	Use available resources to identify and address any issues of inequality as a result of being a vulnerable person. Supporting learners both academically and pastorally in order to be successful.
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to maximise opportunities to improve diversity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:	
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to improve equality of opportunity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:	
Is there any possibility that this policy could operate in a discriminatory way?	<input type="checkbox"/> x
If you have ticked yes (red), which characteristic will be most affected? Choose an item.	
If yes please confirm that the Policy has been sent for a full Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment, and note the date:	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap to enter a date.

Note: if the policy does not seek to increase diversity or improve equality you should go back and review it before submitting it for approval.

MAPPING OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS	
Which United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Right does this policy most protect:	Art. 28 Right to education Choose an item.
Which Human Right (HRA) does this policy most protect:	Art. 6 Right to a fair trial Choose an item.

DATA PROTECTION & PRIVACY BY DESIGN SCREENING	
Tick to confirm that you have considered any data protection issues as part of the design and implementation of this policy; and, that implementing this policy will <u>not</u> result in the collection, storage or processing of personal data outside of official College systems:	✓
Tick to indicated that this policy has or requires a Data Privacy Impact Assessment:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Bursary & Financial Assistance Policy & Procedure 2021-2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1. South Gloucestershire & Stroud College (SGS) recognises the importance of widening participation and access for all students.
- 1.2. SGS recognises that the bursaries and scholarships available for current students has an important role to play in removing some of the barriers students' can face in accessing and completing their Higher Education programmes; SGS endeavours to utilise funds to make the maximum impact on recruitment, attendance, retention achievement and success rates, for current and prospective students'.
- 1.3. SGS recognises that the availability of a Financial Assistance Fund may be important to supporting students to remain in education and continue with their studies; positively impacting upon their educational, social and personal development and enabling personal and social mobility.
- 1.4. SGS reviews its fees and its fee policy bi-annually.

2. Statement

- 2.1. This document covers current SGS students continuing into Higher Education who enrol on their first Higher Education programme with SGS between September 2021 and September 2022.
- 2.2. To be eligible, students must enrol onto a regulated full-time or part-time Higher Education programme [on part-time programme pathways pro-rotta bursary rates apply).

3. Objectives

- 3.1. Bursaries are intended to enable students to have access to funds to support, when appropriate, their living expenses, travel costs and to fund, in whole or part, the cost of essential learning equipment (this list is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive).
- 3.2. Bursaries are intended to enable students to access Higher Education and to facilitate progress and progression. They aim to enable students to access, as appropriate and necessary, the support that may be required to sustain their progress on their programme and enable them to reach their potential. Bursaries are not intended to provide financial benefit or advantage.

4. Implementation

- 4.1. Bursaries will be distributed over the first academic year of study by way of three termly payments. Payments will be made towards the end of each term and scheduled thus: 25% paid in the first and second terms (October and February) and 50% paid in the third term (May). Full degrees studied on a part-time basis will be split by 50% and paid as stated below. Payments will only be made if a student's attendance remains over 80% in each respective term (and overall by the third term).
- 4.2. The College will terminate the award of a Bursary and/or Financial Assistance for any student who ceases to be an enrolled student of SGS, for whatever reason. Students may be required to repay any payment made within that term as a result of withdrawing.
- 4.3. Students who are experiencing unexpected financial problems or additional expenses to remain on the programme are encouraged to apply to the Financial Assistance Fund for support. This fund is for emergency use only and is open to all Higher Education students, although this fund is limited. Payments are decided on an individual basis by an internal panel comprised of the Head of Higher Education Student Recruitment and Experience, the Head of Faculty – HE Curriculum, Quality and Development and the Quality Compliance Manager, using strict eligibility criteria. This fund is non-repayable. Students may appeal against decisions relating to payments from the Financial Assistance Fund by contacting the College Principal. The decisions of the Principal are final and binding.

5. Eligibility Criteria for the Financial Assistance Fund

- 5.1. Students seeking to access the Financial Assistance Fund must be:
 - 5.1.1. Currently enrolled at SGS on a Foundation Degree, Bachelor's Degree or Higher National Diploma (HNC/D) programme;
 - 5.1.2. Able and willing to provide evidence to support their application to the Financial Assistance Fund; this evidence should include the last three months' worth of all their bank, savings and credit card statements. Payments of over £100 may require further explanation;
 - 5.1.3. Able to evidence attendance of at least 80% or above, or be able to evidence valid mitigating or extenuating circumstances to explain any non-attendance which must be supported by formal mitigating or extenuating circumstances documentation.
 - 5.1.4. The Financial Assistance Fund is to help students who are experiencing financial difficulty. Applications will be individually assessed. The maximum payment per academic year is £300 however, higher amounts may be considered in exceptional circumstances.
 - 5.1.5. Students who receive support from the Financial Assistance Fund, must be fully committed to completing their programme. If for any reason this

does not occur, then the student may be invoiced for the return of any funds distributed to them.

6. Eligibility Criteria for Bursaries and Scholarships

6.1. Students can apply for **one** bursary/scholarship each year. The exception to this rule, is for those students who are successful in receiving bursary funds towards their Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) reports, who may have to apply again for the final year of their course. Students who receive a bursary must be fully committed to completing their programme. If any reason this does not occur, the student may be invoiced for the return of any funds distributed to them.

Bursaries:

6.2 **Progression Bursary**; available after enrolment to all students who have completed and achieved a full-time Level 3 at SGS. Bursary applicants must have studied continuously, and achieved a full-time L3 programme within the last two academic years at SGS. Students on a full-time degree or HND would be entitled to £500 payment paid in three instalments during each academic year. The Progression Bursary will be paid over two years for a foundation degree or HND and over three years for a full-time degree.

6.3. **Local Partner School Bursary**; available for application by students who have completed a full-time Level 3 course from any local school involved in the Local Partnership School Scheme (SGS Connect). These students are entitled to a one-off £500 Local Partner School Bursary payment. This bursary will be paid in three instalments during the first academic year.

6.4. **Care Leavers Bursary**; available for application by students aged between 18-21 (or older if being helped with education or training) who, immediately before turning 18, were under the care of a Local Authority or a Health and Social Care Trust [and have evidence to support this status] may be entitled to a £1,000 bursary paid in three instalments during each academic year of study.

6.5. **Mature Student Bursary**; available for application by students who are classed as mature (aged 24+ at their point of enrolment) and re-entering education. This bursary constitutes a payment of £500, paid in three instalments during the first year of study for full-time students.

6.6. **Young Carers and Adult Carers [aged 18+] Bursary**; awarded to students who can supply evidence of caring or looking after someone at home, who could not otherwise cope without their support. These students may be entitled to an annual payment of £500, paid in three instalments for each year of study.

6.7. **The Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) Bursary**; is awarded to all students who are in receipt of a current and valid DSA Assessment. This payment is to reduce the overall cost of the report and is directly deducted from the invoice. Students are expected to contribute £150 to the cost of the report. Those in financial difficulty can apply to the Financial Assistance Fund to cover this

cost, this will not affect the students applying to the Financial Assistance Fund again at a later date.

- 6.8. **The Higher Education Alumni Bursary;** available for application by students who have completed a Level 3 or part-time course at SGS. These students may be entitled to a one-off £500 bursary toward tuition costs for an SGS degree or HNC/D course. This payment will be made in three instalments during the first year of study.
- 6.9. **Low Income Bursary;** available for application by full-time students. These students may be entitled to a £500 bursary payment paid in three instalments during each year of academic study, subject to providing evidence to support. Students must be 1) resident in England, Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland 2) entering into a full-time undergraduate degree or HND being delivered at SGS 3) entitled to funding for fees and living costs from Student Finance 4) from a household with a total income of £25,000 or less.

Scholarships:

- 6.10. **International Athlete Scholarship;** available for application by students who have achieved international status and/or made ten appearances within a professional club (inclusive of Bristol Bears Women's, Bristol City Women's Football Club & Bristol Flyers) in a sporting discipline as recognised by a National Governing Body (NGB). The objective of this scholarship is to support and aid the progress of dedicated and talent athletes alongside their studies. This scholarship constitutes a payment of £1,000. Award decisions will be made and communicated on week six of a study programme and payments will be made in three instalments across the first academic year. In order to receive each part of their payment, Scholars will be required to demonstrate 1) an ongoing and active engagement with their academic course of study 2) that they have been positively involved as an Advocate of SGS and represented the College at three events per academic year, as directed by the Higher Education team. This Scholarship is renewed annually and Scholars will be required to make a fresh application each academic year. A maximum of ten International or professional Athlete Scholarships will be awarded in any given academic year. Applications with a supporting letter from an NGB or professional club will be reviewed on their individual merit by a panel led by the Assistant Principal Higher Education and Adult and the Head of Faculty, Sport and Enrichment.
- 6.11 **Mature Student Scholarship;** available for application by students who are classed as mature (aged 24+ at their point of enrolment) and re-entering education. This scholarship constitutes a payment award of £1,000. This payment will be paid in three instalments during the first academic year. There is a maximum of two scholarships available each academic year. Students will be expected to act as an advocate for students and inform good practice. Applications should consist of no more than 500 words. All applications will be reviewed on their individual merit by a panel of staff consisting of the Assistant Principal Higher Education and Adult, Head of Faculty - Higher Education

7. Related Policies, Procedures

- 7.1. Higher Education and Widening Participation and Retention Policy.
- 7.2. SGS Guidance, Inclusion, Support and Transition and Policy.
- 7.3. SGS Single Equality Policy.
- 7.4. SGS Financial Regulations and Fees Policy.

8. Procedure

- 8.1. All SGS bursaries/scholarships, their eligibility criteria and application process will be clearly set out on the College website and communicated to the students ahead of enrolment. A deadline of the second Friday of October for all applications (with the exception of the Financial Assistance Fund) will be upheld.
- 8.2. Once students can evidence at least six weeks attendance (notionally, after the first week after half term); the first 25% of the bursary/scholarship [and all subsequent payments, to which a student remain eligible] shall be issued by Bankers' Automated Clearing Service (BACS) payment. Students must have achieved and maintained an 80% attendance rate to receive each bursary instalment.
- 8.3. Students must have a UK bank account. Under no circumstances will a bursary/scholarship or Financial Assistance be issued to a third party or paid in cash.
- 8.4. A BACs payment will be raised by the Higher Education Coordinator and issued by the SGS Finance Department.
- 8.5. Students will be informed of the Bursary & Financial Assistance Policy at enrolment. Students wishing to apply to access monies from the Financial Assistance Fund must complete the relevant application form. Once this application is complete an internal panel comprised of the Head of Higher Education Student Recruitment and Experience, the Head of Faculty - HE Curriculum, Quality & Development and the Quality Compliance Manager will consider the application and the awarded payment. The payment will then be raised as soon as possible via the SGS Finance Department.
- 8.6. Decisions and disputes, relating to the payment of any bursary/scholarship and eligibility to the same, may be appealed to the College Principal. The decisions of the Principal are final and binding.

9. Responsibilities

9.1. SGS Corporation and Executive Committee:

- 9.1.1. Will ensure, through the budgetary process, and in-line with any existing Office for Fair Access to Higher Education (OFFA) Agreement/ Access and Participation Plan (Office for Students) and the obligations stated within approved public information make available such funds as are reasonably and necessarily pursuant to this Policy.

9.2. SGS Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- 9.2.1. Will ensure that sufficient resources are available to administer the payment of funds, to those remaining eligible, under any existing Office for Fair Access to Higher Education (OFFA) Agreement/ Access and Participation Plan (Office for Students), obligations stated within approved public information and pursuant to this Policy.
- 9.2.2. The responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) may be delegated as appropriate to any member, or group of members Team who shall report back to the said Team in quorate.

9.3. Assistant Principal, Higher Education & Adult:

- 9.3.1. Will ensure that the continuing administration of the Bursary & Financial Assistance Funds are conducted with reference to and in pursuance of this Policy.
- 9.3.2. Will work with the College's Marketing Team to ensure that Public Information relating to Bursary & Financial Assistance Policy remains up-to-date and accurate, while undertaking such training and continuing professional development necessary to assure the quality and accuracy of the advice and guidance provided to those eligible [and other applicants] to the Bursary & Financial Assistance Policy.
- 9.3.3. Will ensure continued compliance with the SGS Single Equality Policy; and ensure that Quality is informed of all concerns, including complaints, relating to the eligibility to and payment of Bursaries and the Financial Assistance Fund.
- 9.3.4. Will ensure continued compliance with the SGS Financial Regulations and Fees Policy.

9.4. Heads of Faculty, Learning Area Managers, Programme Leads, Teaching and Support Staff:

- 9.4.1. Will ensure the timely referral, to the Higher Education Team, of applications to the Bursary and Financial Assistance Fund
- 9.4.2. Will undertake such training and continuing professional development necessary to assure the quality and accuracy of the advice and guidance

provided to those eligible [and other applicants] to the Bursary & Financial Assistance Policy.

9.4.3. Will maintain the accurate and up-to-date recording of student attendance and other disciplinary and contextual information which may bear upon the eligibility to, or payment from the Bursary or Financial Assistance Fund.

9.4.4. Will endeavour to ensure that claims for mitigating and extenuating circumstances are properly constituted and recorded in a timely manner.

Related Guidance, Strategies and Legislation

- Access and Participation Plan (Office for Students) – from time-to-time in force;
- SGS Financial Regulations
- SGS Fees, Charges & Refunds Policy
- SGS Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment Policy
- SGS Marketing Policy
- SGS Applications, Admissions & Enrolment Policy & Procedure
- SGS Assessment Policy and associated academic regulations

Definitions of the types of documents in use at SGS

Each document produced on behalf of SGS must be created in line with the type of information it conveys thus being named and structured accordingly

Document	Definition
Code of Practice	A set of principles or rules
Guidance	Advice on the given subject
Guideline	Further information put forward to set standards or determine a course of action
Plan	A detailed method for attaining an objective
Policy	Governing principle that mandates or constrains College activity or the activity of College employees and/or students. It will be used college-wide NB These must be approved by Corporation and/or Executive Committee due to legal implications
Procedure	They must identify the step-by-step processes to ensure compliance and all users are consistent in their approach to the given subject Procedures must be attached to policies if required by legislation or Corporation/Executive Committee
Scheme	A systematic plan for a course of action

Statement	An account of provisions made to meet the needs of a specific situation/group
Strategy	Long term plan for success