
Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund Policy 2021-22



Introduction

1. This policy sets out the financial support available through, and eligibility for, bursary funding for students aged over 19 who are in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan (ALL), attending further education courses at the University for the Creative Arts (UCA).
2. UCA is committed to ensuring the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund (ALLBF) is targeted towards those learners facing the greatest financial barriers to continuing in education after the age of 19.
3. This Policy sets out how the University will allocate funds for the ALLBF and should be read in conjunction with the [Advanced Learner Loans funding rules: 2021 to 2022](#).

Context

4. The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), through the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund, provides targeted support to learners (Learner Support) who could not participate or remain in learning without financial assistance for essential costs like transport, equipment and childcare.
5. Due to the limited nature of the fund, no help can be given with tuition fees or accommodation costs.
6. The ALLBF is also available for eligible students to provide 'in learning' support (Learning Support). For further information see paragraphs 104-108 in the [Advanced Learner Loans funding rules: 2021 to 2022](#).
7. In 2021/22 the total allocation for the ALLBF is £42,255. UCA must ensure that sufficient funding is available from the Fund to meet both Learner Support costs, Learning Support costs, and also area costs. For further information on area costs

see paragraphs 109-112 in the [Advanced Learner Loans funding rules: 2021 to 2022](#).

8. Funds cannot be transferred between the ALLBF and the Adult Learner Support Fund (see separate Policy).

Learner Support

Eligibility

9. To be eligible for the ALLBF in 2021/22, students must be aged 19 or over on the 31 August 2021.
10. Students must also have applied and have been approved for an Advanced Learner Loan (ALL) for fees.
11. Students must satisfy the residency criteria set out by the ESFA by fulfilling the following criteria:
 - i. A UK national or other person with a right of abode in the UK who has been ordinarily resident in the UK or British Overseas Territories or Crown Dependencies (Channel Islands and Isle of Man) for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning.
 - ii. A UK national living in the EEA on or before 31 December 2020. In addition, students must have lived in the EEA only or the EEA and UK only for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning, and have lived continuously in the EEA only and/or the EEA and the UK only between 31 December 2020 and the start of the course.
 - iii. EEA nationals who have obtained either pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme and have lived continuously in the EEA, Gibraltar or UK for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning.

If students have any other residency variations, they need to contact the Specialist Adviser on their campus. Full details of eligibility for funding can be found in the [ESFA Adult education budget: funding rules 2021 to 2022](#).

General conditions

12. Applications for the ALLBF will be accepted throughout the academic year or until the funding has been fully allocated, whichever is sooner.
13. In addition to meeting the income criteria, students must demonstrate that they have a clear financial need. Awards may not be granted where students have over £1000 personally available to them once all course and travel costs have been paid.
14. Applications can be accepted, and awards agreed provisionally prior to the start of the academic year.
15. The University reserves the right to request repayment of all or part of any award received if a student withdraws from their course or consistently fails to meet the attendance requirements.
16. Where applicable, students are required to make a new application for the second year of their course.
17. All award payments are subject to a minimum attendance rate of 90% whilst on course. If a student has a lower rate of attendance their award payments may be suspended or refused. However, the student will be provided with an opportunity to submit any extenuating circumstances to their Specialist Adviser.
18. Students must complete an application form and provide evidence of approval of an Advanced Learner Loan. Evidence is also required of household income to include, where relevant; benefit notices, Tax Credit Award Notices, P60 and any other required evidence of personal status.
19. If students are living at home supported by parent(s)/guardian(s)/partner, they will be assessed against their own and their parents'/guardians'/partners' income, except in exceptional circumstances.
20. If the student lives independently or with parent(s)/guardian(s) but the Specialist Adviser is satisfied that they are not supported by them, then only their individual income and/or any partner's income will be taken into account when assessing their application.

Means-testing will be rigorous but not excessive and evidence from other recent income assessment will be used wherever possible.

Assessment

21. Initial assessments will be undertaken by the campus Specialist Adviser. The application will then be checked by a second Specialist Adviser as follows:

- Canterbury applications will be considered by the Farnham Specialist Adviser
- Epsom applications will be considered by the Canterbury Specialist Adviser
- Farnham applications will be considered by the Rochester Specialist Adviser
- Rochester applications will be considered by the Epsom Specialist Adviser

Where an application is complex or does not meet the standard criteria, then referral will be made to a third Specialist Adviser to ensure a decision is reached.

Hardship Awards

22. Awards are assessed on household income (including income from certain benefits) with priority given to students whose household income is below £28,000 or who are in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support.
- Income- based Jobseekers Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- The guaranteed element of the State Pension Credit.
- Child Tax Credit provided there is no entitlement to Working Tax Credit, and an annual gross income of less than £28,000 as assessed by HMRC.
- Universal Credit and an annual gross income of less than £28,000.

If household income is above the maximum threshold but there are exceptional extenuating circumstances, an application and supporting evidence can be submitted. In these instances, any award will need to be agreed by three Specialist Advisers.

23. Awards can be given to assist with the following:

- i. Course costs - equipment packs, printing costs, local day visits and trips
- ii. Daily travel expenses to and from UCA:

- If a student is attending UCA where another provider of the same course is available nearer to home this may affect eligibility for support with travel expenses.
 - The student is expected to take advantage of any subsidised travel passes and student travel concessions if available.
 - Payments for travel by car will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.
 - *Students must keep evidence of their travel costs as they will be asked to provide them.*
- iii. Childcare where childcare is provided by an Ofsted registered provider e.g. nursery, child-minder or after school club. Due to the limited nature of the allocation, any award for childcare can only be a contribution towards these costs.
- iv. If your circumstances change during the year please contact your Specialist Adviser.
24. Awards are made as follows, however should the number of applications be greater or lesser than anticipated, award amounts may be amended accordingly.

Income less than £28,000 or in receipt of one of the benefits listed:

- Course costs: we will pay for your equipment pack, local day visits and a contribution of £50 towards printing costs
- Trip costs: where applicable we will pay for the UK trip or £200 towards the overseas trip
- Travel costs: we will pay travel costs up to a maximum of £1200*

*If a student is eligible to apply for a concessionary travel pass, such as the Student Oyster Card or Arriva student saver tickets, they will have their award capped at the cost of the pass rather than the figure quoted above.

When calculating income an annual deduction of £2780 will be made for each additional dependent child (excluding the student).

Payments

25. All payments are made subject to an attendance rate of at least 90%. Awards are not guaranteed to cover all costs.

26. Payments to third parties will require a signed authority from the student.
27. Course costs awards (e.g. equipment packs, study trips and local visits) will be paid directly to the University.
28. Travel awards will be paid directly to the student through a BACS transfer to accounts in their name only, unless otherwise requested in the application form by them. Awards are generally paid termly in advance. Students are required to submit their travel receipts at the end of each term in order for next terms payment to be made.
29. Childcare awards will be paid termly in advance and are generally paid directly to the provider e.g. child minder.

Administration

30. Bursary providers are allowed to use up to 5% of the total allocation for administration costs.
31. Providers will be required to submit a mid-year funding forecast in February and a final funding claim in October in respect of Learner Support. The funding claims guide produced annually by the ESFA details requirements.
32. All unspent funds will be recovered by ESFA.

Monitoring

33. Monitoring of the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund is the responsibility of the Director of Library & Student Services, in conjunction with the University's Finance Department. Expenditure is monitored termly with the Finance Department's Ledger Manager and reported to the Head of Gateway Services & User Experience via the Gateway Services Managers meetings.
34. Take-up of the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund will be monitored annually by the Specialist Advisers, with a report produced at the end of each academic year for the Director of Academic Services.
35. Feedback from students on the impact of the Bursary on their learning will be collected annually to provide additional anecdotal information for the end of year report.

Appeals Panel

36. If a student wishes to appeal they are required to appeal in writing within 14 days from the date of the decision letter; enclosing any additional supporting evidence. Appeals should be sent to:

Head of Gateway Services & User Experience
UCA Epsom
Ashley Road
Epsom
Surrey KT18 5BE

Alternatively appeals can be emailed to fefunds@uca.ac.uk

37. The Appeals Panel will comprise the Head of Gateway Services & User Experience (Chair), a Gateway Services Manager, a Specialist Adviser not involved in the original decision and a representative of the Students' Union.
38. The panel will meet within of 14 days of receipt of an appeal.
39. The panel's decision is final and this will be communicated to the student in writing within 7 days of the panel meeting.

Learning Support

Eligibility

40. Where Learning Support is required, students must also have been assessed by the University's Disability & SpLD team.

Administration

41. Learning Support must be reported using rate 2 (£150) in the Learning and Delivery Funding and Monitoring field of the ILR. This information is to be provided by the Disability & SpLD team to the Finance Manager, as and when required.

42. Bursary providers are allowed to use up to 5% of the total allocation for administration costs.
43. Providers will be required to submit a mid-year funding forecast in February and a final funding claim in October in respect of Learner Support. The funding claims guide produced annually by the ESFA details requirements.
44. All unspent funds will be recovered by ESFA.

Monitoring

45. Monitoring of the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund is the responsibility of the Director of Academic Services, in conjunction with the University's Finance Department. Expenditure is monitored termly with the Finance Department's Ledger Manager and reported to the Head of Gateway Services via the Gateway Services Managers meetings.
46. Take-up of the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund will be monitored annually by the Specialist Advisers, with a report produced at the end of each academic year for the Director of Academic Services.
47. Feedback from students on the impact of the Bursary on their learning will be collected annually to provide additional anecdotal information for the end of year report.

General Data Protection Regulations

48. As part of the application and assessment process for bursary support, students and any adults supporting the application will be asked to consent to the collection and processing of all personal data submitted as part of this process. All parties will be required to read the University's Student Data Protection Privacy Notice available at uca.ac.uk/data-protection-policies and be asked to give their consent by signing the statement at the bottom of the application form.
49. If students and/or adults supporting the application are not willing or are unable to give their consent, this may impact on our ability to process the application and this should be discussed with the Specialist Adviser.