

Funding Information: Discretionary Funds 2009/10

What are Discretionary Funds?

Discretionary Funds are used by colleges and universities to help learners who have financial difficulties. The money is not a loan so there is no need to pay it back.

How do Discretionary Funds work?

Publicly-funded Scottish colleges and universities receive funding to help provide support for students who, for whatever reasons, have financial difficulties or who would not be able to enter or stay in Higher or Further Education for financial reasons. There are Higher Education Discretionary Funds for students taking advanced courses and Further Education Discretionary Funds for those taking non-advanced courses.

Full-time, part-time and sandwich-course students in Further or Higher Education at publicly-funded institutions can apply for a payment from these funds. The student must meet the residence conditions for a student loan, even if they are on a non-advanced course. There is no age limit for students to receive payments from these funds, but there is a maximum amount any student can receive in a year.

Do you qualify?

You may be eligible for funding from the **Higher Education Discretionary Funds** if you:

- have passed your statutory school leaving age
- are accepted on a recognised Higher Education course at college or university (full or part-time)
- either meet the residency criteria or are eligible for student loan support
- have taken out the full entitlement of all other available support
- can show that you need financial help and that you have looked at other ways of supporting yourself.

You may be eligible for funding from a **Further Education Discretionary Fund** if you:

- have passed your statutory school leaving age;
- are on an eligible non-advanced course at one of Scotland's colleges; **and**
- meet the residency criteria (broadly, ordinary residence in the UK for three years, although some EC citizens and refugees are also included); **or**
- are an asylum seeker on a full or part-time English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course or other part-time non-advanced courses; **or**
- are a student on an ESOL course, but not a student whose main reason for being in the UK is education.

The college or university is responsible for deciding which students should receive payments and how much each payment should be. They are also responsible for all other matters relating to these funds, including handling appeals.

The amount of money you receive is individually assessed, with a maximum limit of £3,500 per academic year. These funds are limited, however, and may not be available to every student.

How to apply for Discretionary Funds

If you want more details about these funds contact the college or university you are studying at or have applied to study at. Generally, if you are studying on an advanced course, you will have to apply for your full student-loan entitlement before they can consider your application.

Useful terms

Ordinarily Resident

Ordinarily resident means that you live in Scotland year after year by choice throughout a set period, apart from temporary or occasional absences such as holidays or business trips. Living here totally or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education may not count as being ordinarily resident.

Higher Education (advanced)

Higher Education courses are those at Higher National Certificate level or above (that is Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework level 7 or above). They can be taken at colleges or at universities throughout the UK.

Further Education (non-advanced)

Further Education courses are those below Higher National Certificate level (that is Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework level 6 or below) and are typically taken at college.