

# Discretionary Funds Policy

December 2011

Also available in large print (16pt)  
and electronic format.

Ask Student Services for details.

[www.perth.ac.uk](http://www.perth.ac.uk)

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# Discretionary Funds Policy

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out the position from which Perth College UHI will administer the Discretionary Funds that it receives annually and how these funds will be distributed to students.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 The policy covers both Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) Discretionary Funds, including the Child-Care Funds.

## 3 Definitions

- 3.1 Discretionary Funds are intended to provide non-repayable assistance for students in financial difficulties in order for them to access and/or continue in education and are paid in addition to any other forms of student support. Discretionary Funds are supplementary to core sources of student funding such as Bursaries and Student Loans.
- 3.2 Hardship Funds is the name by which Discretionary Funds were previously known.

## 4 Key Principles

- 4.1 Discretionary Funds will be administered and distributed entirely in accordance with the relevant policies and guidance set out by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS).
- 4.2 As such, the College may decide to transfer available monies between funds, including the Bursary Fund, in order to best meet the needs of students.
- 4.3 HE Funds will be distributed within relevant agreed, UHI wide parameters.
- 4.4 All students will be required to obtain and fully complete a Perth College UHI "Discretionary Funds application form", and to supply any requested documentary evidence, before they can be considered for an award from the Discretionary Funds.
- 4.5 Funds will be distributed only to current Perth College UHI students who meet the eligibility criteria set out by SFC/SAAS and who demonstrate financial hardship both on their application forms and through supplied documentary evidence.

- 4.6 Students who do not meet the eligibility criteria for Discretionary Funds will not receive an award and will be sent a letter informing them of this and detailing the reason for their ineligibility.
- 4.7 Discretionary Funds will be distributed on the premise that the funds available should be used to help support as many eligible students as possible, as much as possible.
- 4.8 In order to achieve 4.7, maximum limits will be set on awards and so generally no student will receive more than the set maximum in any given academic year. However, this maximum may be waived on the authorisation of the Customer and Student Services Manager if it is appropriate in a particular, individual student's case.
- 4.9 Students will receive awards in 3 equal instalments throughout the academic year.
- 4.10 Before receiving any payment from the Discretionary Funds students will be required to attend the Student Services area within the College to provide signatory confirmation that they wish to receive the award, that they agree to the conditions attached to the award and that the payment details held by the College are accurate.
- 4.11 Receipt of each instalment of an award is dependent upon the student's continued satisfactory attendance on their course. If a student's attendance is deemed to be unsatisfactory they will not receive payment. However, any subsequent payment can still be received if attendance has reached satisfactory levels when this payment is due.
- 4.12 If a student is granted an award from the Discretionary Funds on the basis of a disability and the award is made in order to buy large items of equipment, such equipment will remain the property of Perth College UHI after the end of the academic session. As such all equipment will require to be returned by an agreed date.
- 4.1.3 The College may at times provide an award to a student in the form of service provision rather than payment, in-line with relevant policy and guidance.
- 4.14 Applications to the Discretionary Funds will be processed within a maximum of 21 days. However, in situations in which a student is in emergency need of financial help, their application will be prioritised and processed as quickly as possible.
- 4.15 Students may appeal the decision that is made on their Discretionary Funds application. All students who apply will be provided with details of how to make an appeal.

## 5 Responsibilities

5.1 The Assistant Principal Curriculum and Planning has overall responsibility for this policy.

5.2 The Customer and Student Services Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring funds are distributed and administered in line with this policy and relevant SAAS/SFC Guidelines;
- Overseeing the on-going development and improvement of the Perth College UHI Discretionary Funds Procedure;
- Dealing with student appeals and complaints relevant to Discretionary Funds;
- Updating this policy.

5.3 The Student Funding Adviser is responsible for:

- Accurately and professionally advising students on Discretionary Funds;
- Distributing Discretionary Funds application forms;
- Conducting interviews with students submitting applications for Discretionary Funds;
- Assessing applications and making effective judgements on students' eligibility and award amounts in line with both this policy and relevant SAAS/SFC Guidelines;
- Monitoring the Discretionary Funds budgets and providing the Customer and Student Services Manager with accurate, up-to-date budget data on request;
- Gathering and checking student attendance information and using this to inform payments of Discretionary Funds awards;
- Maintaining all paper and electronic records relating to Discretionary Funds consistently, accurately and within confidentiality and Data Protection guidelines;
- Liaising with the Finance Team in coordinating the Discretionary Funds accounts;
- Liaising with UHI Executive Office on the HE Funds;
- Carrying out all preparations for audits;
- Ensuring all work relevant to Discretionary Funds is carried out in line with this policy and the Discretionary Funds procedure;
- Leading the on-going development and improvement of the Perth College UHI Discretionary Funds Procedure.

5.4 Quality approval checking of the policy is the responsibility of the Quality Manager who will also arrange for the policy to be posted on the college intranet.

## 6 **Linked Policies/Related Documents**

- 6.1 Perth College UHI Guidance Policy.
- 6.2 Perth College UHI Discretionary Funds Procedure.
- 6.3 UHI Higher Education Discretionary Funds Policy.
- 6.4 UHI Higher Education Discretionary Funds Operational Guidance.

## 7 **Relevant Legislation/Guidance**

- 7.1 2010-11 National Policy: Further Education Discretionary Fund and Childcare Fund (SFC).
- 7.2 Higher Education Undergraduate and Postgraduate Discretionary and Childcare Funds. Guidance for Academic Year 2010-11 (SAAS).

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