

# Discretionary and Childcare Funds Policy

March 2018

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

Ask Student Services for details.

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

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**Version Control History**



<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Summary of Revisions Made</b>
6.1	March 2018	<p>Footer updated to reflect new template model.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.1 updated scope of procedure.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.1 Minor change to wording.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.14 Mentioned specific examples of where students might need emergency financial help and prioritisation of application.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.16 Added paragraph to indicate that policy is subject to revision in the light of changes to national policies and guidance.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.1 Changed overall responsibility for procedure to Head of Student Services.</p> <p>Paragraph 7 Removed year-specific data for national policies.</p>
6.2	December 2018	Change of role to Quality Manager. Updated footer.

# Discretionary and Childcare Funds Policy

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out the position from which Perth College UHI will administer the Discretionary and Childcare 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 and Childcare Funds and applies to all eligible students.

## 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.

Childcare Funds are intended to provide or fund childcare for students studying at College. These funds, which are discretionary and cash-limited, are intended to supplement existing resources used to directly support students' study-related childcare costs.

- 3.2 Hardship Funds is the name by which Discretionary Funds were previously known.

## 4 Key Principles

- 4.1 The 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 fully complete a Perth College UHI Discretionary and Childcare Funds application, and to supply any requested documentary evidence, before they can be considered for an award from the 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 and through supplied documentary evidence.

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- 4.6 Students who do not meet the eligibility criteria for Discretionary and/or Childcare 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 The 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 Head of Student Services or Student Funding Adviser if it is appropriate in a particular, individual student's case.
- 4.9 Students will receive awards in monthly instalments throughout the academic year. Childcare Funds will generally be payable to the childcare provider rather than the student. In some circumstances, a student may receive an emergency one-off payment of Discretionary Funds.
- 4.10 Before receiving any payment from the Funds, students will be required 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 correct.
- 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 Fund 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.
- 4.13 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 Funds will be processed within a maximum of 21 days. However, in situations in which a student is from a Care Experienced background or from a similarly identified disadvantaged group, and 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 application. All students who apply will be provided with details of how to make an appeal.

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- 4.16 This policy is subject to change in light of any Scottish Funding Council (SFC) or Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) policies or Government legislation which may impact directly on it.

## 5 Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Head of Student Experience has overall responsibility for this policy, including:

- 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 and Childcare Funds Procedure;
- Dealing with student appeals and complaints relevant to Discretionary and Childcare Funds;
- Updating this policy.

- 5.2 The Student Funding Adviser is responsible for:

- Accurately and professionally advising students on Discretionary and Childcare Funds;
- Distributing Discretionary and Childcare Fund application forms or, where appropriate, providing the links to the online application portal;
- Conducting interviews, where necessary, with students submitting applications for Discretionary or Childcare 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 Fund budgets and providing the Head of Student Services with accurate, up-to-date budget data on request;
- Gathering and checking student attendance information and using this to inform payments of Discretionary and Childcare Fund awards;
- Maintaining all paper and electronic records relating to Discretionary and Childcare Funds consistently, accurately and within confidentiality and Data Protection guidelines;
- Liaising with the Finance Team in coordinating the Discretionary and Childcare Fund accounts;
- Liaising with UHI Executive Office on the HE Funds;
- Carrying out all preparations for audits;
- Ensuring all work relevant to Discretionary and Childcare Funds is carried out in line with this policy and the Discretionary and Childcare Funds procedure;
- Leading the on-going development and improvement of the Perth College UHI Discretionary and Childcare Funds Procedure.

- 5.3 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 web.

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

Perth College UHI Discretionary and Childcare Funds Procedure.

## 7 **Relevant Legislation/Guidance**

National Policy: Further Education Discretionary Fund (SFC)

Higher Education Undergraduate and Postgraduate Discretionary Funds Guidance (SAAS)

National Policy: Childcare Funds for Further and Higher Education Students in Scotland's Colleges (SFC)

Further and Higher Education Childcare Funds Guidance (SFC/SAAS)

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