



Education
Funding
Agency

16 to 18 Residential Support Scheme

**Guide for the 2014 to 2015 academic
year**

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Introduction

1. This guide provides information to all those involved in the delivery of the Residential Support Scheme (RSS) in the 2014 to 2015 academic year. It gives general advice about the criteria for eligibility for the scheme which have been set by the Education Funding Agency (EFA).
2. This guide does not attempt to offer definitive advice for every situation; stakeholders who require further or more detailed help and advice should contact the Learner Support Service (LSS) who administer the scheme on behalf of the EFA. The 'Further Information' section below provides useful telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

A summary of the Residential Support Scheme (RSS) in the 2014 to 2015 academic year

3. The RSS is intended to help support students aged 16 to 18 with the costs of living away from home to participate in a study programme because the same or a similar programme which delivers an equivalent qualification is not available locally to their home address.
4. The point above represents a clarification of RSS policy. Analysis of the qualifications RSS supported students are enrolled on has highlighted that some students are enrolled on qualifications that are available locally to their home address but which have been described differently in their RSS application form, reflecting additional activities the student is also undertaking.
5. RSS is available to students who intend to follow a full-time study programme (including either a level 2 or level 3 substantial qualification/s) that has 16 to 19 funding by the EFA at an educational institution in England.
6. Students must meet all the eligibility criteria set out at paragraphs 9 to 29 in order to receive RSS support.
7. RSS can provide annual support of up to £3,458 (up to £4,079 in the London area) towards living costs. If they are assessed as eligible, the amount of award they receive will be based on their actual accommodation costs up to the maximum award thresholds.
8. Young people on waged Apprenticeship programmes, or any education or training where a wage is being drawn, are not eligible to apply for support.

Student eligibility

9. To be eligible for RSS support in the 2014 to 2015 academic year, a student must meet the following criteria:

Age

10. The student must be aged at least 16 and under 19 on 31 August 2014. Where a student turns 19 during the academic year, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year.

Residency

11. The student must be settled in the UK and ordinarily resident in England for the three years preceding the start of their study programme.

12. 'Settled' means having either indefinite leave to enter or remain or having the right of abode in the UK. Please see paragraph 29 below about dependents of armed forces personnel posted to bases overseas.

Household income

13. Students must have a household income of £30,993 or less in the previous tax year. For the 2014 to 2015 academic year this is the 2013 to 2014 tax year. The 'household' is defined as the student and the adults they live with who are mainly responsible for them.

14. The amount of RSS awarded to an individual is based on an income-assessment which uses the following thresholds:

Gross income level	Up to £21,000	£21,001-£25,704	£25,705-£30,993	£30,994 and over
Maximum RSS award - outside London	£3,458	£2,305	£1,152	nil
Maximum RSS award - inside London ¹	£4,079	£2,685	£1,355	nil

15. These amounts are the maximum available for each income bracket and students will not receive the maximum if the actual costs of their accommodation are less than the figures shown. If the study programme lasts for less than one year then the amount of support will be awarded on a proportional basis.

16. A student may apply to be assessed as an Independent Student if they meet one of the following conditions at the start of the academic year:

- they are married or in a civil partnership

¹ The following London Boroughs are eligible for the London weighting: Barking & Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney & City of London, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston-upon-Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond-upon-Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth and Westminster.

- they are a parent and are the main carer for the child
- they have supported themselves for at least three consecutive years (36 months) prior to the commencement of their study programme
- they have no living parents
- they are estranged from their parent(s)

17. Students should contact the Learner Support Service by calling 0800 121 8989 if they think they meet the independent student conditions.

Study programme

18. Students must have been offered a place on a full-time study programme (including either a Level 2 or Level 3 substantial qualification/s) that has 16 to 19 funding by the EFA at an educational institution in England.

19. Institutions should refer to EFA Funding Guide for the 2014 to 2015 academic year for further information. This document will be available at: [EFA Funding Guide](#)
Institutions must ensure that students submitting applications for RSS have a place that is funded on this basis.

20. The study programme must lead to a full Level 2 or full Level 3 substantial qualification. This should normally be the young person's first qualification at those levels.

21. However, support for repeat qualifications may be provided in exceptional circumstances, for example, if a student:

- wishes to pursue a second Level 2 which is vocational where their first Level 2 was an academic qualification
- holds a Level 2 qualification but is required by the provider to undertake a further specific Level 2, in order to progress into the necessary Level 3 element of the programme
- seeks to pursue a second Level 3 as preparation for entry into higher education and the second Level 3 specifies an existing Level 3 qualification as part of its entry requirements

22. In exceptional cases support may be provided for study programmes that do not include level 2 or level 3 qualifications.

23. It is important to note that no exceptions to the first full Level 2 or first full Level 3 substantial qualification criteria can be guaranteed. Any such applications will be assessed on a case by case basis with decisions based on the specific circumstances in each instance.

Attending a study programme outside of reasonable daily travelling distance

24. The student must be living outside of reasonable daily travelling distance from the institution because the same or similar study programme which delivers an equivalent qualification is not available locally to their home address.

25. For the purposes of RSS, the key element of the study programme against which same or similar is assessed is the substantial qualification that is being funded by the EFA. Equivalent qualifications are those which have the same learning aim reference number on the Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS) database and whose content satisfies the awarding body's criteria.
26. Paragraph 25 represents a clarification of RSS policy following an analysis of the qualifications undertaken by RSS supported students. This analysis highlighted that a number of students in receipt of RSS are undertaking qualifications that are available locally to their home address but which have been described differently, and that some students are in receipt of RSS where it is only the additional activities rather than the substantial qualification which is not locally available. This policy clarification will not affect students who are returning to RSS in the 2014 to 2015 academic year but will apply to all new students.
27. Reasonable daily travelling distance is defined as a daily return journey that takes less than two hours on public transport; or a distance of under 15 miles from the student's home or term-time lodgings to the educational institution.
28. Students cannot apply for RSS if they are attending one of the specialist institutions which administer Residential Bursary Funds (RBF) – [see paragraph 47](#).
29. Students cannot receive RSS if they are in receipt of Housing Benefit.

Dependents of armed forces personnel posted overseas

30. If the student is the child, spouse or partner of a person who is a member of the armed forces serving outside of the UK they will be exempt from the requirement to be ordinarily resident in England for the three years prior to the start of their study programme.

The RSS application form and process

31. Wherever possible, students should apply for RSS before the start of their study programme. To apply, they must have an unconditional offer of a place. Applications may be made after the student has started their study programme but awards will only be backdated to the beginning of the term in which the application was made.
32. In the 2014 to 2015 academic year, [RSS application forms and guidance notes](#) to help students fill in the forms are available to download from GOV.UK. No hard copy forms are available. Any students who require the form in a more accessible format can request this by clicking on the link on the web page.
33. It would be appreciated if institutions could provide assistance to students who are unable to print out a copy of the application form themselves.
34. In order to submit an application, the student should print off the application form, complete sections A1 to A12 – ensuring that they have read the Privacy Notice and, Student Declaration. The student must sign and date the form and then pass the application to the institution to complete section A13. Once the institution has completed section A13 they should return the application to the student for the responsible adult(s) and student to complete their income details in Part B. It may also be necessary for them to complete Part C if all or part of their joint household income for the 2013 to 2014 tax year is from social security benefits.

35. In section A13, the institution must confirm that they have obtained confirmation from the student's home local authority that the same or similar study programme which delivers an equivalent substantial qualification is not available locally to the student's home address. The institution must complete the declaration on the application form, including the contact details of who has been consulted, and sign and date the form.

36. If the institution identifies that the student is a dependent of a member of the armed forces posted overseas ([see paragraph 30](#)) they should contact the Learner Support Service for advice.

37. Once the application has been fully completed by all parties, it should be sent by post (in an A4 envelope) to the Learner Support Service at the following address:

Freepost RSLX-CAZR-RHLY
Learner Support Service
BIRMINGHAM B24 9FD

38. It is important that all parties: student, responsible adult(s) and the institution sign and date the form before submitting it. Unsigned forms cannot be processed and payments will be delayed.

39. The student must include a copy of their tenancy agreement with their application form. This must have been agreed and signed and include the following information:

- the student's name
- the student's term time address
- the dates of the tenancy
- the cost of the rent
- the landlord's name, address and signature (please note: the landlord cannot be related to the student)

40. The student's term time lodgings must be no further than 15 miles from their institution.

41. If the student has not yet arranged lodgings, only a provisional Notice of Entitlement (NoE) will be issued by the Learner Support Service. Final eligibility will only be confirmed once the tenancy agreement has been received by the Learner Support Service; no payments will be released before this.

42. Once the student's RSS application has been assessed by the Learner Support Service, they will write to the student and the institution to notify them of the outcome.

Payments and monitoring

43. The Learner Support Service will send payments to institutions at the beginning of each term for the institution to pay to the student's landlord or agency. Institutions must retain proof of payment.

44. If the student has already paid the rent, institutions may refund their costs (but this must be within the period agreed in the RSS award). Again, they should retain proof of payment.

45. The attendance of RSS supported students is monitored by the Learner Support Service via the remittance advice and AS1 reports which the Learner Support Service will send to institutions for completion. It is the responsibility of the student and/ or institution to notify the Learner Support Service of non-attendance and the potential stoppage of payments. If the Learner Support Service identifies that the student has left their study programme, they will calculate any potential overpayment and attempt to recover funds from the institution or, if the institution has notified the Learner Support Service that payment has already been made to the landlord, from the student.
46. Administration of RSS is subject to the institution's normal governance and audit regimes.

Institutions with Residential Bursary Funding

47. A small number of institutions are not part of RSS; instead they operate the Residential Bursary Fund (RBF). Students at these institutions are not eligible for RSS support but should apply directly to their chosen institution for help with residential costs. A [list of institutions](#) with RBF allocations in the 2014 to 2015 academic year is available on GOV.UK.

Further Information

48. For further help and advice, institutions can contact the Learner Support Service helpline on 0300 303 8610 or by e-mailing: rss@efalearnersupport.co.uk
49. Young people can call the student helpline on 0800 121 8989.



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