

# Student Support in Further Education 2015/2016

June 2015

## Introduction

This factsheet aims to provide information on the different types of support available to students who are planning to study **a full or part-time further education course in 2015/2016**.

## Student Finance

Further education normally refers to **post-16 study** and is usually provided by local colleges or schools.

**Students aged between 16 and 18 will not normally have to pay tuition fees** and may be eligible for support through the **Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)**.

**Students aged 19 and over** studying full-time may be charged tuition fees. However, most further education colleges offer free or discounted tuition to learners from low income families, disabled learners or for learners in receipt of benefits. They may also be eligible for support via the **Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG)**.

There are also a number of other sources of financial support, outlined in this guide that may be available to further education students depending on individual circumstances.

## Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

**Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)** is available to 16 to 18 year olds living in Wales who want to continue their education after school leaving age. Eligible new claimants in 2015/16 can get **£30 a week, paid every two weeks** depending on household income. For **Academic Year 2015/16** claimants have to be between **16 and 18 years old on 31 August 2015**.

There are a number of **eligibility criteria** that students must meet in order to be able to claim EMA. **UK citizens living in Wales** will normally be eligible for EMA, although non-UK citizens may also be eligible.

### Course eligibility

In order to claim EMA a student must be studying at a **participating school or college** on an **eligible course** that is:

- **Academic or vocational** up to and including Level 3;
- **Full time** at school, or a minimum of **12 guided hours at college**;
- At least **10 weeks in length**

These courses include many different qualifications such as **GCSEs, A/AS levels, BTEC, NVQ/GNVQ** and **Basic Skills** courses.

### Household income

Household income is worked out depending on whether a student is classed as a **dependent** or **independent** student.

To claim EMA, annual household income must be **£20,817 or less** in households with one dependent young person and **£23,077 or less** in households with two or more young people eligible for child benefit.



Students will **not** be eligible for EMA if their household income is **£23,078 or more**.

Further details on eligibility criteria can be obtained via Student Finance Wales on **0300 200 4050** or [emawales@slc.co.uk](mailto:emawales@slc.co.uk). The Student Finance Wales website also includes further information on eligibility and also contains **guidance for returning students**.

**Application forms for 2015/16** can be obtained from the Student Finance Wales website.

## Welsh Government Learning Grant Further Education (WGLG FE)

The **Welsh Government Learning Grant** for Further Education (WGLG (FE)) aims to help students who come from families on a low income to continue in further education. It is available to students **19 years old and over**, depending on eligibility criteria. Eligible claimants can receive a grant of up to **£1,500 for a full-time course** and **£750 for a part-time course** depending on the combined total household income.

For **Academic Year 2015/16** claimants have to be between **19 years old or over on 31 August 2015**.

**UK citizens living in Wales** will normally be eligible for WGLG FE, although non-UK citizens may also be eligible.

### Course eligibility

In order to qualify for WGLG FE a student must be studying at a participating college on an eligible course, that is:

- At least **275 hours**;
- leads to a **nationally recognised qualification**

Individual colleges can advise on whether a course is eligible for WGLG FE funding.

### Household income

The amount of WGLG FE a student may receive is tiered at four intervals, according to their household

income.

In order to receive the full £1,500 grant a student would need to be studying a full time eligible course and have an annual household income of £6,120 or less, whilst students with a household income of £18,731 or more would not be eligible for WGLG FE.

Household income is worked out depending on whether a student is classed as a **dependent** or **independent** student.

Annual Household Income	Welsh Government Learning Grant (FE) available (part time / full time)
up to £6,120	£750 / £1,500
£6,121 - £12,235	£450 / £750
£12,236 - £18,370	£300 / £450
£18,371 and over	£0

Further details on eligibility criteria can be obtained via Student Finance Wales on **0300 200 4050** or [wglgfe@slc.co.uk](mailto:wglgfe@slc.co.uk). The Student Finance Wales also includes further information on eligibility and **guidance for returning students**.

**Application forms for 2015/16** can be obtained from the Student Finance Wales website.

## Further Support for part-time Further Education

Many individual institutions offer free or discounted tuition to learners 19 and over studying part-time from low income families, disabled learners or learners on benefits. Advice on support available to part-time students can normally **be obtained from individual colleges**. These can be contacted using the details included in the **College Contact Details** section of this guide.

Students who are out of work and also studying part-time may also still qualify for **Jobseeker's Allowance**, if the course totals **less than 16 hours a**



**week** and the individuals are still available for work. Students should contact their **local Jobcentre Plus** office to check eligibility.

The **Careers Wales website** provides further information on funding for students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

## Financial Contingency Funds (FCFs)

The Welsh Government provides funding to further education colleges in Wales to operate a hardship fund for their students, known as **Financial Contingency Funds (FCF)**. Some institutions also refer to these as Students Support Funds or Student Hardship Funds.

The total value of FCFs in Further Education is approximately £7 million annually across Wales. They are normally allocated to students to help with meeting **costs which are not already being met from other sources of funding**, to provide emergency payments in respect of unexpected crises and to assist in cases where a student may be considering leaving their course of study because of financial problems, such as:

- **Childcare costs** – assistance with paying for childcare costs whilst attending college;
- **Transport costs** – such as bus or rail passes or petrol allowances;
- **Essential course equipment** – such as books or other specialist equipment required to study a particular course.

Each college will have its own arrangements for the allocation of its fund. Students are advised to **enquire with the student support or welfare service at the further education provider at which they study, or intend to study, about how to make an application under its Financial Contingency Fund**. Individual awards are therefore determined **by the institution at which the student studies** on a case by case basis.

Contact details for individual colleges are included in

the **College Contact Details** section of this guide. Local authority **Family Information Services** can provide further advice on the availability of childcare in local authority areas.

## Professional and Career Development Loans (PCDL)

**Professional and Career Development Loans (PCDLs)** are available to anyone aged 18 or over wishing to undertake a course or training which will equip the applicant with the skills needed for an occupation, trade or profession – also known as **vocational training**.

PCDLs are available for full-time or part-time learning **and between £300 and £10,000** can be borrowed. The PCDLs are available from three high street banks participating in the scheme. More detailed information can be obtained from the PCDL Information Line on **0800 100 900** as well as the **GOV.UK website**.

## Research Service

The Research Service has produced a separate factsheet entitled *Higher Education – financial support for adult and postgraduate learners*. This guide aims to signpost sources of information relating to **Undergraduate and Postgraduate Study**. It also contains information on databases, charities, trusts and foundation that may provide individuals with financial assistance, which may also be useful to those studying in Further Education.

- **Higher Education – financial support for adult and postgraduate learners** (PDF, 233KB)

View our **full range of publications** on the Assembly website.

## College Contact Details

The contact details below are taken from the individual college websites **as of June 2015**. Where possible, contact numbers and email addresses are to student support services within organisations. The hyperlinks also lead to student finance or student support sections on individual college websites.

These contact details may be useful to students seeking advice on the **Financial Contingency Funds** and **further support for part-time FE study**.

### **Coleg Gwent**

**Tel:** 01495 333776

**Email:** [Contact form](#)

### **St. David's Catholic Sixth Form College**

**Tel:** 02920 498555

**Email:** [enquiries@stdavidscollege.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@stdavidscollege.ac.uk)

### **Cardiff and Vale College**

**Tel:** 030 30 30 1010

**Email:** [info@cavc.ac.uk](mailto:info@cavc.ac.uk)

### **Coleg y Cymoedd**

**Tel:** 01658 887500 (Aberdare)

**Tel:** 01443 662800 (Nantgarw)

**Tel:** 01443 663202 (Rhondda)

**Tel:** 01443 816888 (Ystrad Mynach)

**Email:** [enquiries@cymoedd.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@cymoedd.ac.uk)

### **Coleg Merthyr Tydfil**

**Tel:** 01685 726000

**Email:** [Contact form](#)

### **Bridgend College**

**Tel:** 01656 302302

**Email:** [enquiries@bridgend.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@bridgend.ac.uk)

### **NPTC Group (Neath Port Talbot College)**

**Tel:** 01639 648000

**Email:** [enquiries@nptcgroup.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@nptcgroup.ac.uk)

### **Gower College**

**Tel:** 01792 284000 (Ty Coch)

**Tel:** 01792 890700 (Gorseinon)

**Email:** [info@gowercollegeswansea.ac.uk](mailto:info@gowercollegeswansea.ac.uk)

### **Coleg Sir Gâr**

**Tel:** 01554 748036 / 748102

**Email:** [financialsupport@colegsirgar.ac.uk](mailto:financialsupport@colegsirgar.ac.uk)

### **Pembrokeshire College**

**Tel:** 01437 753133

**Email:** [guidance@pembrokeshire.ac.uk](mailto:guidance@pembrokeshire.ac.uk)

### **Coleg Ceredigion**

**Tel:** 01970 639700 (Aberystwyth)

**Tel:** 01239 612032 (Cardigan)

**Email:** [enquiries@ceredigion.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@ceredigion.ac.uk)

### **Llandrillo Menai Group**

#### **Coleg Llandrillo**

**Tel:** 01492 542330

**Email:** [studentfinance.llandrillo@gllm.ac.uk](mailto:studentfinance.llandrillo@gllm.ac.uk)

#### **Coleg Meirion Dwyfor**

**Tel:** 01341 422827 / 01758 701385

**Email:**

[studentfinance.meiriondwylfor@gllm.ac.uk](mailto:studentfinance.meiriondwylfor@gllm.ac.uk)

#### **Coleg Menai**

**Tel:** 01248 383305

**Email:** [learnerservices.menai@gllm.ac.uk](mailto:learnerservices.menai@gllm.ac.uk)

#### **Coleg Cambria**

**Tel:** 01244 834511

**Email:** [enquiries@Cambria.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@Cambria.ac.uk)

#### **YMCA Wales Community College**

**Tel:** 02920 755444

**Email:** [info@ymca-wales.ac.uk](mailto:info@ymca-wales.ac.uk)

#### **WEA Cymru**

**Tel:** 0345 4500 607

**Email:** [info@weacymru.org.uk](mailto:info@weacymru.org.uk)

