

Circular Number: FE 04/23

Date of Issue: 17th May 2023

FE Coding Guidance: Eligibility for Learner Support Funding

Target Audience:

- FE College Principals
- FE MIS

Summary of Contents:

This circular provides guidance relating to the different options available in the Learner Support Funding Indicator field and the eligibility criteria. It also updates circular FE06/17 in relation to Free School Meals.

Colleges are asked to bring this guidance to the attention of all staff recording learner data on the Learner Management System (LMS).

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the contents of this circular should be addressed to:

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Related Documents: FE06/17

Superseded Documents:

Expiry Date: N/A

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CODING GUIDANCE

1. A new CDR Verifier and a new CDR field will be introduced as part of the CDR 2023/24 Changes to allow recording of learners in receipt of Learner Support Funding from the academic year 2023/24 onwards.
2. This circular outlines guidance regarding the available options in the Learner Support Funding Indicator field and provides eligibility criteria for each option to ensure colleges code consistently and in line with Department of Education/Education Authority guidance.

Values	Year	Description
01	2023	Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
02	2023	Care to Learn
03	2023	FE Grant (previously FE Award)
04	2023	Hardship Fund
05	2023	Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME)
06	2023	Disability Student Allowance (DSA)

3. It is important to ensure FE colleges are recording consistently across the sector and in line with the Department of Education and Education Authority guidance.
4. To facilitate this, new options have been added to the Learner Support Funding field and the eligibility criteria is included in **Annex A**.
5. The Learner Support Fund should be recorded against the CDR enrolment (Q level) to which it applies. If there are multiple qualifications attached to a programme, the Learner Support Fund should be recorded against the primary qualification.
6. The Learner Support Fund should be recorded if the learner has been in receipt of support funding at any time during the academic year.
7. Please note that multiple support funds can be recorded.
8. Colleges are asked to ensure that the clarifications set out in this guidance are brought to the attention of all staff recording learner data on the Learner Management System (LMS) and that the necessary changes are made to the system to allow the new options to be recorded.

ANNEX A – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE LEARNER SUPPORT INDICATOR FIELD

Option	Description	Criteria
EMA	EMA is a weekly allowance of £30 to help 16-19 yr olds with costs of Further Education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner studying full time at school or minimum of 15 hrs per week at FE college on eligible course • Learner meets nationality and residency requirements • Learner lives in household with income of: £20,500 or less and is only young person or £22,500 or less, and there's at least one other young person in household who qualifies for Child Benefit • Learner has not already received maximum allowance for EMA scheme • Learner is aged 16-19 on or before 1st July in the academic year of enrolment
CTL	CTL scheme provides students aged between 16 -20 who are a parent, with help	Learner must during their course of study be or become:

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	towards childcare costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the main carer of their child/children • at least 16 years old • under 20 yrs of age at the start of their course of study and meet residency requirements under the Education (Student Support) Regulations (Northern Ireland) • Learners must also meet residency criteria set out in prevailing Education (Student Support) Regulations (Northern Ireland) and be using a registered childcare provider.
FEG	Education Authority offers a limited number of Further Education grants each year for full and part time courses undertaking courses up to and including Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students apply via the Education Authority and must meet several criteria surrounding course type, age, previous study, residence, and status as an independent/dependent student. A full breakdown of the eligibility criteria is available at; Further Education Grants Education Authority Northern Ireland (eani.org.uk)
Hardship	All Further Education colleges provide a Hardship Fund for students experiencing	If students are in financial need and require assistance with any of the following

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	<p>significant financial problems. Conditions apply and students should contact their respective college directly for advice.</p>	<p>categories, they are eligible to apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Fees • Additional Living Costs (FT only) • Travel Costs • Books and equipment costs (essential/required) • Childcare Costs <p>Students must exhaust all other available sources of funding before applying. All applicants must read their respective college's Guidance & Terms and Conditions before submitting an application.</p>
<p>FSME</p>	<p>If you are aged under 18 on the 31st July in the academic year of enrolment and studying a Full Time Education course you may be entitled to free school meals through the Education Authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They or their parent is in receipt of Income Support or Income based Jobseekers Allowance • They or their parent is in receipt of Income related Employment Support Allowance • The parent receives Child Tax credit or working tax credit with an annual taxable income of £16,190 or less • They or their parent is in receipt of Universal

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		<p>Credit with a net household earnings not exceeding £14,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parent receives the Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit • They are an asylum seeker supported by the Home Office Asylum Support Assessment Team (ASAT) • They have a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and are designated to require a special diet
<p>DSA</p>	<p>Disability Student Allowance is additional funding to help students with extra essential costs as a direct result of a disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To qualify for DSA you must have a disability that meets the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 and that impacts your ability to study. • You will be asked for proof such as a report or letter from your doctor or a diagnostic assessment from a psychologist or suitably qualified teacher • Learner must meet residency and nationality requirements • Course and place of study be eligible for funding • Course must result in one of following qualifications:

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ A first degree, eg: a BA, BSc or Bed➤ A foundation degree➤ A certificate of higher education➤ A diploma of Higher Education (DipEd)➤ A Higher National Certificate (HNC)➤ A Higher National Diploma (HND)➤ A Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)➤ Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
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Evidence of receipt must be obtained and retained for audit purposes.