

Financial support for students in further education 2023/24 - a guide for constituents

For September 2023 entry



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1. Introduction

This guide provides information on the different types of financial support that you might be able to get if you are planning to or are already studying a full- or part-time further education course in Wales from September 2023.

Further education often means education from the ages of 16 to 18, although adults can also participate. It is usually run by local colleges and sixth forms.

Some local authorities have a mix of sixth forms and local colleges, whilst some local authorities have colleges only. Further education is different from higher education, but your local college might run both further and higher education courses. They will make it clear which is which when you are looking at courses.

This document is meant as a general guide and won't cover everyone's situation. You should speak to **Student Finance Wales** and/or your college or sixth form for advice on your own situation.

Disclaimer: Senedd Research is regularly asked about student finance and this quick guide sets out information about some of the questions we are most frequently asked. It is not intended as a comprehensive guide and you should always seek advice from Student Finance Wales or a suitably qualified professional that is tailored to your individual situation.

2. Tuition fees

If you are aged 16 to 18, you don't normally have to pay tuition fees.

Some local colleges do charge a small enrolment fee (around £30-£50) to cover things like your library card though. If you can't afford this fee speak to the college about it.

If you are aged 19 and over, you might be charged a tuition fee. You should check with the place you are studying at, or thinking of studying at, to see what your situation is. They might be able to offer you **free or reduced fees** in certain situations, for example, for part-time study, if you or your family have a low income, if you have a disability or you receive benefits.

If you are on benefits you might still be able to carry on getting them and study. The rules here are very complicated so you should raise it with your local Jobcentre or speak to the Department for Work and Pensions who can give you advice. This page has a **list of helpline numbers**.

3. Funding for students aged 16-18

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

EMA is for **full-time students in further education who are aged 16-18**, and who **live in Wales**. To be **eligible for EMA**, you need to live in Wales, but you don't need to study in Wales. Your college or school has to be participating in the scheme, and the course you study has to be eligible. There are lots of eligible courses, including GCSEs, AS or A Levels, BTECs, NVQs and GNVQs. Your college or sixth form will be able to tell you if your course is eligible.

There are also nationality requirements, but if you are a UK citizen living in Wales you should be eligible. Non-UK citizens might also be eligible. You should check with Student Finance Wales or your college or sixth form if you aren't sure.

If you meet all the rules then you could get up to £40 a week paid every fortnight, but this does depend on your household's income. Your household income must be below a certain level for you to get EMA.

To get EMA your household's income must be:

- less than £20,817 if you are the only young person; or
- less than £23,077 if there are more young people living with you.

If your household income is above these levels then you won't normally be able to get any EMA.

Student Finance Wales can be **contacted for information on EMA** by phone Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm on 0300 200 4050. Student Finance Wales has also published **The Little Book of EMA** with further information for 2023/24.

Cheaper bus travel

You can apply for a mytravelpass which makes **bus travel cheaper for 16-21 year olds**. The travel card can save you up to a third of the cost of a ticket. You'll need to **apply for the card here**.

4. Funding for students aged 19 and over

Welsh Government Learning Grant Further Education (WGLG FE)

WGLG FE is for **students aged 19 or over** on 1 September 2023. As this is a grant, it **does not have to be repaid**.

To be eligible you must be studying an **eligible course at a participating college**. Your **course must be at least 275 hours during the academic year** and lead to a **nationally recognised qualification** such as GCSEs, AS/A Levels, BTECs, NVQs and GNVQs. Your college or sixth form can tell you if your course is eligible.

However, **if you've previously received WGLG FE for studying a course at the same level or higher than the course you want to study now, you won't be eligible for the grant**.

There are also nationality requirements, but if you are a UK citizen living in Wales you should be eligible. Non-UK citizens might also be eligible. You should check with Student Finance Wales or your college or sixth form if you aren't sure.

To get WGLG FE, **your household income must be £18,370 or less**. You can get a grant of **up to £1,500 for a full-time course** and **£750 for a part-time course** but the actual amount depends on your household income.

Further information on how much you can get and whether it's based on your income or your household income is [available here](#).

Student Finance Wales can be **contacted for information** on WGLG FE by phone Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm on 0300 200 4050. Student Finance Wales has also published a [Guide to the WGLG FE with further information for 2023/24](#).

Cheaper bus travel

You may be able to apply for a mytravelpass which makes **bus travel cheaper for 16-21 year olds**. The travel card can save you up to a third of the cost of a ticket. You'll need to [apply for the card here](#).

5. Financial Contingency Fund (FCF)

The **Welsh Government gives money to colleges in Wales** so they can help students who might be facing financial difficulties, or who are likely to leave their education. This money is known as Financial Contingency Funds (FCFs). Some colleges may call them Student Support Funds or Student Hardship Funds.

The money is given to colleges, and they are free to set their own detailed rules as long as they stay within Welsh Government guidelines. Colleges will usually help students by offering emergency payments if you are facing financial difficulties or if money problems are making you think about leaving your course.

You should contact your college for further information on the FCF.

6. Contacts and resources

[Careers Wales](#) can give you further information on funding for students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

College contact details

The contact details below were taken from the individual college websites in July 2023.

Coleg Sir Gâr

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#)
- Telephone: 01554 748000
- Email: admissions@colegsirgar.ac.uk

Coleg Gwent

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#)
- Telephone number: 01495 333 777

St David's Catholic Sixth Form College

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#)
- Telephone number: 0292 049 8555
- Email: enquiries@stdavidscollege.ac.uk

Cardiff and Vale College

- [Website](#)
- Telephone number: 02920 250 250
- Email: info@cavc.ac.uk

Coleg y Cymoedd

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#) (please note there are separate contact details for the different campus sites)
 - Email: enquiries@cymoedd.ac.uk
-

The College Merthyr Tydfil

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#)
- Telephone: 01685 726000
- Email: enquiries@merthyr.ac.uk

Bridgend College

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#)
- Telephone: 01656 302 302
- Email: hello@bridgend.ac.uk

NPTC Group

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#) (please note there are separate contact details for the different campus sites)

Gower College

- [Website](#) – please note there are separate contact details for each campus
- Email: enquiries@gowercollegeswansea.ac.uk

Pembrokeshire College

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#)
- Telephone: 01437 753 000
- Email: info@pembrokeshire.ac.uk

Coleg Ceredigion

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#) - please note there are separate contact details for each campus
- Email: enquiries@ceredigion.ac.uk

Llandrillo Menai Group

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#) - please note there are separate contact details for each campus

Coleg Cambria

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#)
- Telephone: 0300 30 30 007

Adult Learning Wales

- [Website](#) and [contact form](#)
- Telephone: 03300 580845 or 02920 382 431
- Email: info@adultlearning.wales