



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoinachaidh na h-Alba

In-year management of college student support allocations 2021-22

SFC Call for Information

Issue Date: 12 November 2021

In-year management of college student support allocations 2021-22

Issue date: 12 November 2021

Reference: SFC/CI/15/2021

Summary: Invitation to colleges to relinquish unspent student support funds or request an increase to their student support allocations for AY 2021-22.

FAO: Principals/Finance Directors and student support contacts at Scotland's colleges.

Further information: **Contact:** Student Support Team
Directorate: Finance
Email: studentsupport@sfc.ac.uk

Contents

In-year management of college student support allocations for 2021-22	4
Purpose	4
Background	4
In-year redistribution exercise for AY 2021-22	4
Management of payment of AY 2021-22 funds	5
Next steps and further information	5
Annex A.....	6
In-year management of AY 2021-22 student support funds: instructions for completion of request form	6
Estimating demand for student support	6
In-year redistribution form for AY 2021-22.....	7
Additional information required in AY 2021-22.....	8
Care-Experienced students.....	8
Multi-college regions.....	8
General conditions.....	9
Next steps	9

In-year management of college student support allocations for 2021-22

Purpose

1. This Call for Information invites colleges to relinquish unspent student support funds or request an increase to their student support funding allocations for Academic Year (AY) 2021-22.

Background

2. The in-year management and redistribution of student support funds is an ongoing feature of SFC's annual student support funding cycle.

In-year redistribution exercise for AY 2021-22

3. Instructions for completion of the redistribution request form are set out in [Annex A](#) to this letter. Colleges should particularly note the guidance on estimating demand for student support. SFC will email forms pre-filled with student support data to colleges on an individual basis following publication of this letter. As in previous years, these forms will include sections for colleges to:
 - Confirm the data on their student support spend and Care-Experienced students supported in AY 2020-21, as returned to SFC through their Further Education Statistics (FES) returns.
 - Confirm details of the student support funding paid to each college during AY 2020-21, so that colleges can reconcile the information they are returning with their drawdown and payment details.
 - Provide any contextual and supporting information.
4. Colleges should note that, for the purpose of the 2021-22 in-year redistribution exercise, student support data is defined as *core* student support funding allocations only. Specifically, this includes:
 - Original student support funding for AY 2020-21 (Table 4 in the [College Funding Announcement for AY 2020-21](#)).
 - Funding requested/relinquished/allocated following the 2020-21 in-year redistribution exercise (Annex A in the [In-year Redistribution of Student Support Funds 2020-21 Announcement](#)).
 - Additional Discretionary Funding 2020-21 (Annex C in the [In-year Redistribution of Student Support Funds 2020-21 Announcement](#)).


5. The following are NOT included in the 2021-22 in-year redistribution and will be subject to a separate clawback process:
 - Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) student support 2020-21.
 - National Transitional Training Fund (NTTF) student support 2020-21.
 - [Additional Winter Discretionary Funding](#) (allocated for AY 2020-21).
 - [Additional Summer Discretionary Funding](#) (allocated across AYs 2020-21 and 2021-22).
6. A summary of these various allocations was shared with colleges in September 2021.
7. As in previous years, SFC will also be asking for additional, separate information on the costs to colleges of implementing changes to student support funding as a result of the Scottish Government's response to the Independent Review of Student Support. Therefore colleges are also asked to return information on the costs associated with the expansion of the higher rate Care-Experienced Student Bursary, including to those aged 26 and over.
8. Further details are set out in [Annex A](#).

Management of payment of AY 2021-22 funds

9. SFC will contact colleges in early June 2022 to seek clarification of their near-final position on student support spend in AY 2021-22. Colleges that have drawn down their full student support budget but are forecasting a significant underspend against their budget, will be asked to reduce their July 2022 drawdown of funds or return surplus funds to SFC in July 2022, rather than waiting until the AY 2022-23 redistribution exercise in Autumn 2022.

Next steps and further information

10. Colleges should complete the request form and email it to SFC's Student Support team, email: studentsupport@sfc.ac.uk by **29 November 2021**.
11. Colleges will be individually notified of SFC's decision on any requests for additional funding in December 2021. We will announce the sector outcome of the AY 2021-22 in-year redistribution exercise in early 2022.
12. For further information please contact: studentsupport@sfc.ac.uk.



Chris Brown
Acting Director of Finance

In-year management of AY 2021-22 student support funds: instructions for completion of request form

Estimating demand for student support

1. SFC continues to work with colleges on accurately estimating demand for student support. Student support expenditure in 2019-20 and 2020-21 has been directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, however, we hope that 2021-22 will see a return to a more normal pattern of student support spend. As with previous years, colleges are reminded of the need to provide accurate bids for student support funding, based on realistic predictions of student demand.
2. The starting point for determining need for student support funding should be based on colleges' existing commitments to support students already enrolled for 2021-22.
3. SFC is aware that colleges can still be receiving and processing applications for student support at the point where we ask for the in-year redistribution submission. In addition, most colleges will expect to enrol additional students later in the academic year. Therefore colleges need to calculate the volume of additional student support funding applications they expect to receive for the remainder of the academic year.
4. Colleges then need to estimate the likely level of support required by the additional students. In performing this calculation, colleges should take into account historic data on the differential spend patterns at course/subject level, for different types of student (e.g. full-time/part-time, by gender, by age group, including Care-Experienced). For example, colleges should be aware of the following factors that will have a bearing on the resources required:
 - Some subjects will have a higher level of demand for SFC student support funding than others.
 - Female students are more likely to require childcare funding than males.
 - Any move from FE to HE level provision, or from full-time to part-time provision, will reduce demand for SFC student support funding.
5. All of these factors will have a bearing on the quantum of resources required in the coming year. SFC strongly recommends that colleges build in assumptions for these factors when predicting need, rather than basing their requests on historic average levels of funding. Colleges should not assume that all of their additional students will require the maximum level of funding.

6. After the college has calculated the predicted level of additional student support funding required, it is essential that they make a reduction to the overall requirement to take account of the impact of student withdrawals. This should be based on a realistic assumption of the expected level of withdrawals, based on historic data at the college.
7. **Colleges should not build large and unrealistic contingencies into their bids for funding.** This results in inflated claims and creates a false impression of the level of unmet demand for student support, but more importantly it limits SFC's ability to move funds to where they are currently needed.

In-year redistribution form for AY 2021-22

8. As in previous years, the in-year redistribution form will be pre-filled with the following information:
 - Colleges' core student support funding allocations for AY 2020-21 (as detailed in [page 4, paragraphs 4 and 5](#)).
 - Colleges' spend on student support in AY 2020-21, as detailed in the FES returns (funds that have been allocated to students flagged as YPG/NTTF are shown but excluded from the core redistribution).
 - The funds that colleges have been paid for student support in 2020-21, so that colleges can reconcile the information they are returning with their drawdown and payment details.
 - Colleges' core student support funding allocations for AY 2021-22.
9. Colleges will then be asked to complete the following information:
 - A split of the 2021-22 allocation by FE Bursary, Childcare and FE Discretionary.
 - The amount of student support funding being requested or relinquished for AY 2021-22.
 - If additional funds are being requested, a breakdown of the amount associated with students already enrolled and the amount required for students not already enrolled (e.g. January start students).
 - If additional funds are being requested, details of the proportion required by the college up until the end of March 2022 and end of July 2022 respectively.
 - Any contextual or supporting information.

Additional information required in AY 2021-22

10. This year, SFC will again be asking for additional, separate information on the costs to colleges of implementing some of the changes to student support funding as a result of the Scottish Government's response to the Independent Review of Student Support.

Care-Experienced students

11. In order for SFC to quantify the additional resource required for the expanded Care-Experienced (CE) Bursary, we have included an additional section in the in-year redistribution form. This section will be pre-filled with the number of CE bursary students that colleges reported that they supported in AY 2020-21 and the amount of bursary (maintenance) funding allocated to these students (as per the FES returns). It will then ask colleges to provide details of:
 - The number of CE students (headcount) who have enrolled up to that point.
 - The committed bursary (maintenance) funding associated with these enrolments, based on the weekly rate of £202.50.
 - A forward projection of numbers of CE students (headcount) who will enrol later in the academic year and an estimate of the bursary (maintenance) funding associated with these enrolments.
 - A reduction to take account of the impact of projected withdrawals of CE students.
 - Estimated numbers of CE students (headcount) who are better off on benefits than bursary.
12. In quantifying the additional cost of the expanded CE Bursary for AY 2021-22, we will assess the increases in colleges' spend on maintenance for CE students arising from the increase in the number of such students attending college. We would expect that the take-up of further education by CE students will increase because of the wider awareness of the new higher rate funding package available for them, as well as the removal of the age cap.

Multi-college regions

13. Multi-college regions should complete the request form as a region, with any transfers of funding between colleges agreed by the colleges within the region prior to the form being submitted. An additional tab is included in the form to provide a breakdown by each individual college in the region.

General conditions

14. The return date for the form is **29 November 2021**. If the amounts of funding that colleges require for student support change by mid-December 2021 because of changing circumstances, colleges should inform SFC of this as soon as possible.
15. SFC expects to be able to meet, in full, college student support funding requests. However, as with previous years, there may be a shortfall in available funds at a sector level. This will mean that the amount of funding going to individual colleges may be capped.
16. SFC reiterates that colleges should adhere to the guidance set out in paragraphs 1-7 when estimating demand. Colleges should avoid inflating their bids for funding, in order that we can redistribute the additional funding available in as fair and equitable a way as possible.

Next steps

17. SFC will email the pre-filled forms directly to college student support contacts following publication of this letter.
18. Colleges should complete the request form and email it to SFC's Student Support team mailbox, email: studentsupport@sfc.ac.uk **by 29 November 2021**.
19. Colleges will be individually notified of the decision on their bids for additional student support funding in December 2021.
20. SFC will announce the sector outcome of the AY 2021-22 in-year redistribution exercise in early 2022.