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**POLICY ON AWARDING GRANTS AND PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**'Mae’r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg'**

**A copy of this policy is available in Welsh**

**Policy originator: Head of Welsh Language**

**Equality Impact Assessment Completed:**

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| **Approved by: College Executive** |  |
|  |  |
| **Approval Date: January 2024** |  |
| **Review Date: January 2026** |  |

**Policy** **Checklist:**

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| **Policy** **Inception** **Requirement** | **Yes** **/** **No** **/** **N/A** | **Supporting** **information** |
| Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed? | **Yes** |  |
| Has a Welsh Language Impact Assessment been completed? Yes, please refer to Appendix One. | **Yes** |  |
| Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been considered with regards to this policy? If yes, please contact the Information Services Manager in order to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment. | **N/A** |  |
| Has the review taken account of the latest Guidance/Legislation? | **Yes** |  |
| Is legal advice required? If yes, please ensure you have taken the necessary steps to secure the appropriate legal advice before proceeding further. | **No** |  |
| Is staff training required? If yes, please ensure that the necessary training is arranged through the Vice- Principal Academic. | **No** |  |
| Are there HR related issues that need to be considered? If yes, please contact the HR Manager to discuss further. | **No** |  |
| Are there financial issues? If yes, please contact the Finance Manager to discuss further. | **No** |  |
| *For* *College Executive use* *only:* | | |
| Is this a new policy?  If yes, College Executive to complete the  [Student FCF Policy - Approval Delegation checklist](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q4YgsfeXoJAXQDLBxseJbh1z7jCZLm7IFanhPoHs064/edit) at the time of approval. | **Yes** |  |

**Equality**

The College will comply with all statutory duties in respect of The Equality Act 2010 and its Protected Characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. The college will work within the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Human Rights Act 1998 and any subsequent enactments or modifications.

Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out at the drafting stage for new policies and where existing policies are reviewed and updated.

**Sustainability**

The college will comply with all statutory duties in respect of sustainable development by seeking to improve the long-term economic, social and environmental wellbeing of people and communities. This needs to be done in ways which promote social justice, equality of opportunity and which enhance the natural and cultural environment while respecting its limits.

**Welsh Language**

The College will comply with its Welsh Language Scheme, which is a statutory document, in all of its activities. This includes conducting Welsh Language Impact Assessments for all new and revised policies and initiatives. A copy of this policy is also available in the medium of Welsh.

**Our commitment to being a Trauma Informed Organisation**

The College is committed to transforming into a trauma-informed institution where safety, collaboration, choice, trust and empowerment are central to our culture and practices, ensuring the wellbeing and resilience of all learners and staff. We prioritise the wellbeing of all, fostering positive relationships and experiences which develop and uphold the resilience of learners and staff.

**Our commitment to becoming an Antiracist Organisation**

Our approach will tackle racism on many levels. We will engage all members of our college community to support transformational change.

We are determined to tackle racial discrimination in all its forms and will be referring to the [Race Relations Act 1976](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=fee515377e5babfeJmltdHM9MTY5OTIyODgwMCZpZ3VpZD0yZGEwYzc3My04ZmUxLTY1ZjMtMzI5MC1kNGRjOGUwMTY0MzEmaW5zaWQ9NTE5Nw&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=2da0c773-8fe1-65f3-3290-d4dc8e016431&psq=anti+racist+legislation+uk&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cubGVnaXNsYXRpb24uZ292LnVrL3VrcGdhLzE5NzYvNzQvZW5hY3RlZA&ntb=1) and to achieve the actions set out in the Black Further Education Leadership Group (BFELG) 10 Point Plan.

We are committed to making sure that our college is inclusive. We want the experience of studying and working here to be positive and welcoming for everyone, of all ethnic and racial backgrounds.

We understand that this is the responsibility of all of us and we expect everyone to play an active part.

**A copy of this policy is available in Welsh**

**Mae’r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This policy takes into consideration and underpins the College’s compliance with the Welsh Language Standards - policy making standards 75, 76A, 78 and 79 and 100 and the Welsh Language Commissioner’s ‘Policy on awarding grants: Good practice advice’ document, setting out the process by which the college makes decisions in relation to awarding a grant or providing financial assistance.

1. **SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

The policy applies to the awarding of all financial grants, bursaries and scholarships and financial assistance provided by the college, including:

* Financial Contingency Fund
* Academic Excellence Scholarship
* Progression Bursary

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the Welsh language is taken into consideration at every step of the ‘financial assistance’ decision making policy, thereby ensuring that:

* The college considers and identifies the effects, if any, the application and decision making process involved in the awarding of a grant, bursary or scholarship would have on the opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language
* The College reduces any adverse impacts on the Welsh language

In doing so, the college will ensure that:

* All promotional, guidance and information documents related to applications for grants, bursaries, scholarships or financial assistance are published in Welsh
* The Welsh language version of these documents is not treated less favourably than the English language version
* Applicants are made aware of the option to apply in Welsh and are supported and encouraged to do so
* Applications submitted in Welsh will be treated no less favourably than an application submitted in English
* Where interviews are part of the decision making process, translation services are provided for those applicants wishing to use the Welsh Language at their interview
* Written or verbal feedback is provided in Welsh to those applications who submitted their application and/or received their interview in Welsh.

1. **RELATED POLICIES**

* College Merthyr Tydfil Financial Strategy
* Financial Regulations
* Equality Strategy
* Welsh Language Policy

1. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Head of Finance and Head of Welsh are responsible for reviewing and developing this policy.

1. **Policy details**

**5.1 CATEGORIES OF GRANTS, BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY THE COLLEGE**

The college currently awards:

**Academic Excellence Scholarship** – awarded to learners who achieve 7 A\*-A GCSE grades and progress directly from Year 11 into the college

**Progression Bursary** – awarded to learners who successfully complete a level 3 qualification at the college and then progress directly into a Foundation Degree or other University level qualification

The college ensures that all aspects of the promotion, guidance and application process for the above scholarship and bursaries comply with this policy and that the Welsh language is considered in line with section 2 above. There is currently no limit on the number of the above bursaries and scholarships awarded. The numbers awarded are based on those learners meeting the eligibility.

**AWARDS ADMINISTERED BY WELSH GOVERNMENT**

The college provides assistance to learners on behalf of the Welsh Government, through the Financial Contingency Fund. The college also supports learners in their applications for financial support through the Welsh Government Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for 16–18-year-olds and the Welsh Government Learning Grant (WGLG) for those learners aged 19 years and over.

**Financial Contingency Fund (FCF)**

Provided annually by the Welsh Government, the college’s Finance and Learner Support and Wellbeing Teams support the promotion, application process and decision-making process for the FCF, which is open to all post-16-year-old learners and is aimed at removing barriers to learning for learners in financial hardship. Access to financial support via this fund is dependent upon household income and individual circumstances.

* The FCF can support eligible learners with:
* Help with childcare costs, especially lone parents.
* Cost of meals
* Transport costs
* Course related costs, including equipment, material, uniform, books and trips, examination or registration fees essential for the eligible learner to participate in course activities.
* The costs of the disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, where applicable
* Funding in the form of grants or short-term loans.

At all times, through the process of promotion, administration, application and decision making, the college ensures that the specific terms and conditions that the FCF assistance includes Welsh language considerations.

Details of the fund are available on the College website and also available in hard copy handouts in both English and Welsh, ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably. This information also includes eligibility criteria and what the FCF can be used for.

The application form is available through the medium of Welsh which states applications submitted in Welsh will be treated no less favourably than those submitted in English.

Applications submitted in Welsh are treated no less favourably than those submitted in English. Applications submitted in Welsh are processed by the college’s Finance Officer, working alongside a Welsh speaker from the college’s Welsh language team.

If the application is submitted in Welsh, the applicant will be contacted in Welsh to be informed in relation to the status and decision regarding the application.

**AWARDS ADMINISTERED BY THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING WELSH VALLEYS ENGINEERING PARTNERSHIP**

The college is involved in the decision making process of the allocation of 10 Royal Academy of Engineering Welsh Valleys Engineering bursaries each academic year. These awards, designed to support learners whishing to progress into a career in Engineering are administered through the Welsh Valleys Engineering partnership team, who advertise them to year 11 pupils in each of the secondary schools across Merthyr Tydfil. The college participates in the process by being a representative on the interview panel for these bursaries.

When the application process opens each academic year, in line with section 2 above, the college will ensure that:

The application form is available through the medium of Welsh which states applications submitted in Welsh will be treated no less favourably than those submitted in English.

Applications submitted in Welsh are treated no less favourably than those submitted in English.

If the application is submitted in Welsh, the applicant will be contacted in Welsh to be informed of the opportunity to receive their interview in Welsh, with the decision regarding their application and interview also being provided in Welsh.

**5.2 PROCEDURES FOR THE AWARDING OF GRANTS, BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Guidance for staff administering the college’s grants, bursaries and scholarships has been developed to ensure that they understand and comply with the Welsh Language Standards (No. 6) Regulations 2017 and that the possible impact of the grants on the following key areas, has been taken into consideration:

* Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh Language
* Impact on the number of Welsh speakers
* Opportunities to promote the Welsh Language
* Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language

When awarding grants and bursaries, the following statement will also be included in all of the terms of conditions of the award:

***This grant/financial assistance is awarded in line with the requirements of our Policy on Awarding Grants, published to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards (No.6) Regulations 2017, under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.***

1. **MONITORING and review**

This policy is informed by, and supports, the college’s overall Welsh Language Policy. Compliance with, and adherence to the policy will be monitored by the Head of Welsh Language as part of the Welsh Language Quality Assurance and monitoring processes and by the College Executive Team through the college’s overall Quality Assurance Process.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, with a Welsh language impact assessment being completed to ensure that any review and revision to the policy has an increased positive effect on opportunities to use the Welsh language, ensuring that the college is treating the Welsh language no less favourably.

**APPENDIX ONE: Action** **Plan for Staff involved in the awarding of grants and bursaries**

Actions should demonstrate steps to be taken to reduce or where possible, eliminate any negative impact on the Welsh Language.

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| **Action** | **Who** | **By When** | **Success Measure (how will we know we have achieved the action)** |
| **Actively promote and encourage learners that are Welsh speaking to apply through the medium of Welsh.** | Finance, Learner Support and Wellbeing Team and College’s Welsh team | September 2023 onwards | Number of grant applications submitted through the medium of Welsh |
| **Supporting students to apply through the medium of Welsh.** | Finance, Learner Support and Wellbeing Team and College’s Welsh team | September 2023 onwards | Number of requests for support to complete the application form through the medium of Welsh  Number of applications made through the medium of Welsh |
| **Working with Welsh Engagement Officer (Welsh) and Welsh Support Officers to raise awareness of opportunities to apply for grants through the medium of Welsh.** | Finance, Learner Support and Wellbeing Team and College’s Welsh team | September 2023 onwards | Number of applications made through the medium of Welsh |