



## Free College Meals Guidance 2018-2019

### Free College Meals – what they are and eligibility

Students must be enrolled in further education provision funded via ESFA to be eligible for a free meal.

#### Age

To be eligible to receive a free meal a student must be aged under 19 on 31 August 2018.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a free meal if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or aged 19-24 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

These 2 groups of aged 19 plus students can receive a free meal while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), if their eligibility continues.

#### Eligible benefits

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students which is defined as students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa

Working Tax Credit is **not** a qualifying benefit for free meals, and a parent/student in receipt of Working Tax Credit only are not entitled to a free meal.

A student is only eligible to receive a free meal when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, have made a successful application to the institution where they are enrolled.

#### Payment

The government funded rate for paying for Free College Meals is £2.41 per student, per day at college. In our College, we are usually able to top this up, so you can expect to receive £3.50. This can be spent on food and drinks at any of the catering outlets in the College.

#### Offsite/Work experience Provision

If you attend lessons off site or will be on a work experience placement you will be paid by BACS into your bank account for those days. You will need to let us know if this applies to you, and we will send you a form for your tutor to complete.

#### Application Procedure

Please complete the online application form, uploading evidence as required. If you are unable to provide evidence online, you can scan and email to us at [BURSARYADMIN@ccn.ac.uk](mailto:BURSARYADMIN@ccn.ac.uk) or bring to the Advice Shop for copying. Paper forms will be available for students unable to access online application and completed forms should be posted to the address below or handed in at the Advice Shop Reception. Applications to Free Meals are open all year and there is no closing date.

Students who are under 16 will need to submit a paper application form from the Advice Shop.

## Universal Credit

From 1 April 2018, any student who is in receipt of, or has parents who are in receipt of, Universal Credit must have a net earned annual income of no more than £7,400 in order to be eligible for free meals.

To verify the eligibility of students, or their parents, who are in receipt of Universal Credit, we will need a copy of your Universal Credit award notice which includes detail of your monthly earnings.

We will use this three-step process to assess eligibility:

- Step 1: We will look at the Universal Credit award statement from your most recent complete assessment period. If your earnings in that period do not exceed £616.67 (this is a twelfth of an equivalent annual income of £7,400) you will be eligible for free meals. If your earnings do exceed £616.67, the check will move on to the next step.
- Step 2: We will look at the Universal Credit award statements from your 2 most recent complete assessment periods. If your earnings in that period do not exceed £1233.34 (this is a sixth of an equivalent annual income of £7,400) you will be eligible for free meals. If your earnings do exceed £1233.34, the check will move on to the next step.
- Step 3: We will look at the Universal Credit award statements from your three most recent complete assessment periods. If your earnings in that period do not exceed £1850.00 (this is a quarter of an equivalent annual income of £7,400) you will be eligible for free meals. If your earnings do exceed £1850.00, you will not be eligible for free meals.

## Transitional protection arrangements

During the period of universal credit roll out, any student using universal credit as the relevant benefit will remain eligible for free meals until the end of their programme of study. This will apply even if your household earnings rise above the new FCM UC threshold during that time.

Any student who becomes eligible for free meals after the threshold has been introduced will also continue to receive free meals during the Universal Credit rollout. This will apply even if they subsequently become ineligible during this period because your household earnings rise above the new threshold

## Contact Details

For further information please contact The Advice Shop, City College Norwich, Ipswich Road, Norwich NR2 2LJ. Telephone Jane or Rachel at City College Norwich on 01603 773322 or Tina at Paston College on 01692 402334. Email us at [financialadvice@ccn.ac.uk](mailto:financialadvice@ccn.ac.uk)