

Scottish Government's Consultation on Job Grant

Introduction

Colleges Scotland is the collective voice for the college sector in Scotland, representing its interests and ensuring that colleges are at the heart of a world class education sector that is recognised, valued and available to all. Colleges Scotland, as the membership body, represents all 26 colleges in Scotland, which deliver both further education and around 26% of the provision of all higher education in Scotland.

Colleges Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the key eligibility criteria and format for the new Job Grant.

Background

During 2017/18, Scotland's colleges serve 242,488 students across various qualifications and levels, of which 46% are aged 16-24 years. Colleges also offer a wide range of study options to accommodate a diverse range of students, this includes courses varying from full-time and lasting a year or more, to part-time and fitting around employment depending on the type of course and student. For example, colleges offer day release courses as part of employment arrangements or for school leavers; block release courses for apprentices and other groups; assessment of work-based learning; and distance learning opportunities.

Research shows that 77% of students now work to fund their studies. Whilst this figure relates to university students, it is fair to anticipate that the picture would be similar for college students with 69% of college students undertaking part-time study.

Attracting more young people in care, those from a looked after background and care leavers to further and higher education is a priority for the college sector as part of our overall strategy to ensure fair access. The numbers of care experienced students continue to increase in the college sector with 3,055 student enrolments in 2016-17.

Consultation Response

Colleges Scotland has consulted with its members on the key eligibility criteria and format. A sector response is outlined below.

Eligibility Criteria

- It would be helpful to have more clarity on the eligibility criteria for the grant, as well as clearer guidance on the type of work which would be considered eligible.
- The grant does not appear to take into account young people who are in part-time education, whilst undertaking employment. For these students the 16 hours limit would be restrictive as they may undertake longer periods of work out with the academic terms.
- The grant does not consider how undertaking a short course or other type of educational training impacts on eligibility. Clearer guidance would be required.

Student bursaries and/or loans

- Further clarity on how the grant would interact with student bursaries and/or loans. Clearer guidance would be required.

Colleges Scotland
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