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Your Guide to
**Adult Learning
Grant (ALG)**

Guide to ALG

If you have applied for ALG (Adult Learning Grant), you will have received general information about the scheme from the Assessment and Payment Body (APB). This leaflet explains how New College will run the scheme in 2009/10.

Attendance

Your ALG weekly payment depends on you having no unauthorised absences from the classes that make up your negotiated Learning Programme and your behaviour has been satisfactory. Your Learning Programme must have at least 450 guided learning hours per year. **This includes tutor period but not enrichment classes.**

Change of Learning Programme

- If you wish to change your Learning Programme, you must speak to your personal tutor immediately so that they can complete a Change of Course Form with you. It is important that this information is completed quickly so that registers can be changed.
- If your Learning Programme falls below 450 guided learning hours, you will no longer be eligible for ALG and your payments will stop.

TIMETABLE OF PAYMENTS

Weekly Payments

- Payment decisions are made on a Tuesday for attendance during the previous week. If all the registers have been completed and there are no unauthorised absences or stoppages due to behavioural issues, the payment should reach your account on the Friday.
- If a payment has been delayed due to unmarked registers, once the register has been completed and the payment has been authorised, please allow 3 working days for the payment to reach your account.
- It is advisable to check your bank account regularly. This way you can monitor if you are missing any payments.

Overpayments

If you have been paid in error, or paid but we then receive further evidence which confirms absences, to rectify the overpayment, the next eligible payment will be withheld. You will be notified in writing if this happens.

Absences

- **If you know in advance of a date/time you will be absent, you must complete a Notified Absence Form before that date. These are available from the EMA/ALG Enquiries Desk behind the reception area (G01) and outside G13. We cannot always accept backdated notification.**
- You should hand your completed form in to the EMA/ALG Enquiries Desk.
- You must notify the college at least 1 hour before your classes are due to start on the day if you have an unexpected absence by calling the **Absence Hotline (01793) 732888**. This gives us the opportunity to let your tutors know. The desk is staffed from 8am to 4.30pm but if the answer machine is on, please leave a message following the instructions given. Any absences not reported on the day will jeopardise the payment for that week. If your absence is due to illness, you should ring each day if your illness continues.
- Details of absences that we will count as authorised are also available on the Student Services section of the College's internal website (Moodle). **Please note that not all notified absences become authorised absences.**
- Sickness absences **will not** be authorised **UNLESS** you have a serious on-going medical condition which could affect your attendance. Please talk to the ALG Administrators and be prepared to provide a medical letter or other evidence confirming your condition. You would still need to report your absences in the usual way.
- If you are absent for a whole week, you will **not** receive a payment for that week. This is part of the Government's regulations.

Authorised Absences - marked as 'A' on the registers

Registers, ALG payments and the authorisation of absences are auditable procedures and therefore evidence will be required if changes are to be made. This list is not intended to be exhaustive and other factors may give cause for consideration such as the number of absences already taken, repetitions of the same excuse and whether you are able to provide suitable evidence. If in any doubt, please speak to the EMA administrators. You should discuss your absences with the ALG administrators. **Tutors cannot authorise absences for ALG purposes.**

- Specialist Medical Appointments (eg at a hospital) which cannot be arranged outside your College hours backed by evidence of an appointment card or letter.
- A particular need to look after a family member or another person where you are registered as their main carer. If this becomes a regular occurrence, your Learning Plan may need to be adjusted.
- A religious holiday/festival. Up to 3 days per year BUT only if notified in advance.
- A visit to a University for an open day or interview.
- A career-related interview.
- An appointment with a Connexions Adviser, counsellor or other member of student services (although these would normally be arranged to avoid disruption to your study).
- A work experience placement which is an integral part of your course and for which you do not receive a wage.
- If you take part in a significant Enrichment activity, such as drama, music, sport or voluntary service, either in College or at a representative level (eg County Competition). Absences of this type should be minimal but where a pattern appears, you should re-negotiate your timetable with your personal tutor.
- Attendance at a probation meeting, court hearing etc. (Confirmation letter may be required).
- Severe disruption of your transport arrangements (public transport only) eg strikes. (Government guidelines suggest 3 miles is not an unreasonable walking distance).
- A College meeting – eg with governors, college disciplinary meeting etc.
- A College field course or visit which is part of one of your courses.
- Official College exam leave periods and examinations.
- Family bereavement.
- Attendance at a family funeral.

Unauthorised absences

The following reasons for absence will NOT be authorised and will be marked by either a 'Y' or 'N' on the registers (Y= sickness/illness N= Notified absence which has not been authorised):

- Sickness / illness
- General medical appointments (ie doctors, dentist, opticians) as these should be made outside your College hours
- Accompanying family members to appointments (unless you are their main carer)
- Holidays
- Part- or full-time work which is not part of your Learning Programme
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting
- Shopping
- Driving Tests (Practical & Theory) or lessons
- Revision outside the exam leave periods

Appeals

The appeals procedure is as follows:

- If you have a payment stopped, we will inform you either by letter via your personal tutor (or to your College email address) of the reasons. This will list the classes you have missed.
- If you disagree with the decision, you should discuss this immediately with your personal tutor and you should both discuss recorded absences with the ALG Administrators.
- You and/or your personal tutor may wish to discuss marked absences with the subject tutors immediately to check accuracy. All changes to register marks can only be authorised and made by the tutor for the affected class.
- Curriculum Managers may be involved as part of the College's absence procedures.
- You can make a formal appeal to the Student Services Manager.
- You can make a final appeal to the Director of Information & Finance. You are entitled to have a representative (eg parent or guardian) at this hearing who may help you to present your case.

It is your responsibility to check your payments regularly, as the earlier any mistake is spotted, the easier it is to put right.

Changes to payment decisions can only be made within 2 weeks of the payment date. Therefore if you fail to hand in an absence form with a valid reason or appropriate evidence for an absence, you will only have two weeks to put this right. If the ALG Administrators do not receive the required information within this time, the payment for that week will be lost.

Any false information or claims made in order to receive ALG will be treated as fraud. If, after an investigation, an attempt to make a fraudulent claim is found to be proven, any ALG entitlement will be withdrawn and you may also face action through the College's disciplinary procedures.

ALG

Remember – the ALG scheme is a ‘something for something’ scheme.

It is there to support you and help you to be successful in education.

If you have any questions about the scheme, please ask your personal tutor for help or speak to the ALG Administrators.