



Education
Funding
Agency

Residential Support Scheme Guide for 2013/14

May 2013

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Introduction

1. This guide provides information to all those involved in the delivery of the Residential Support Scheme (RSS) in 2013/14. It provides general advice about the criteria for eligibility for the scheme which have been set by the Education Funding Agency (EFA).
2. This guide does not attempt to offer definitive advice for every situation; stakeholders who require further or more detailed help and advice should contact the Learner Support Service (LSS) who administer the scheme on behalf of the EFA. The 'Further Information' section below provides useful telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Residential Support Scheme (RSS) in 2013/14

3. The RSS is intended to help support students aged 16-18 with the costs of living away from home in order to study because the provision is not available locally. RSS can provide annual support of up to £3,458 (up to £4,079 in the London area) towards living costs. Students must meet the eligibility criteria set out at paragraph 4 in order to receive RSS support. If they are assessed as eligible, the amount of award they receive will be based on their actual accommodation costs up to the maximum award thresholds.

Student eligibility

4. To be eligible for RSS support, a young person must meet the following criteria:

a) Be 16-18 years of age.

A young person must be aged under 19 on 31 August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. Where a young person turns 19 during their course, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 or to the end of their course, whichever is sooner. RSS is only payable to young people who are aged 16 and over on 31 August before the academic year in question.

b) Have been settled in the UK and ordinarily resident in England for the three years preceding the start of their course.

'Settled' means having either indefinite leave to enter or remain or having the right of abode in the UK. Please see paragraph 5 below about dependents of armed forces personnel posted to bases overseas.

c) Have a household income of £30,993 or less in the previous tax year. The 'household' is defined as the student and the adults they live with who are mainly responsible for them. For the 2013/14 academic year it is the 2012-13 tax year.

The amount of RSS awarded is based on an income-assessment which uses the following thresholds:

Gross income level	Maximum RSS award - outside London	Maximum RSS award - inside London *
Up to £21,000	£3,458	£4,079
£21,001 - £25,704	£2,305	£2,685
£25,705 - 30,993	£1,152	£1,355
£30,994 and over	nil	nil

*The following London Boroughs are eligible for the London weighting: Barking & Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney & City of London, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston-upon-Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond-upon-Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth and Westminster.

These amounts are the **maximum** available for each income bracket and young people will not receive the maximum if the actual costs of their accommodation are less than the figures shown. If their course lasts for less than one year then the amount of support will be awarded on a proportional basis.

A student may apply to be assessed as an **Independent Student** if they meet one of the following conditions at the start of the academic year:

- they are married or in a civil partnership;
- they are a parent and are the main carer for the child;
- they have supported themselves for at least three consecutive years (36 months) prior to the course commencement;
- they have no living parents;
- they are estranged from their parent(s).

Students should contact the Learner Support Service by calling **0800 121 8989** if they think they meet the independent student conditions.

d) Have been offered a place on a study programme funded by the EFA on a full time basis at an institution in England.

Institutions should refer to the 2013/14 EFA Funding Guidance for further information. This document will be available at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/executiveagencies/efa/funding/fundings/a00222378/funding-guidance-2013-to-14>

Institutions must ensure that students submitting applications for RSS have a place that is funded on this basis.

e) Intend to follow a programme of study that has 16-19 funding from the EFA and which lasts for a minimum of ten weeks.

f) Intend to follow a programme of study that is at full Level 2 or Level 3

A programme of study is normally expected to lead to the achievement of the young person's first full Level 2 or first full Level 3 qualification. However, support for repeat qualifications may be provided in exceptional circumstances, for example if a young person:

- wishes to pursue a second Level 2 which is vocational where their first Level 2 was an academic qualification.
- holds a Level 2 qualification but is required by the provider to undertake a further specific Level 2, in order to progress into the necessary Level 3 element of the course.
- seeks to pursue a second Level 3 as preparation for entry into higher education and the second Level 3 specifies an existing Level 3 qualification as part of its entry requirements.

In exceptional cases support may be provided for programmes of study at Level 1.

However, **it is important to note that no exceptions to the first full Level 2 or first full Level 3 criteria can be guaranteed.** Any such applications will be assessed on a case by case basis with decisions based on the specific circumstances in each instance.

g) Be living outside of reasonable daily travelling distance from the institution, where similar provision is not available locally to their home.

- Similar provision is defined as courses which have the same learning aim reference number on the Learning Aim Reference Application (LARA) and whose content satisfies the awarding body's criteria.
- Daily travelling distance is defined as a daily return journey that takes less than two hours on public transport; **or** a distance of under 15 miles from the student's home or term-time lodgings to the learning provider.

Young people **cannot** apply for RSS if they are attending one of the specialist institutions which administer Residential Bursary Funds (RBF) – see Paragraph 17.

Young people **cannot** receive RSS if they are in receipt of Housing Benefit.

Dependents of armed forces personnel posted overseas

5. If the young person is the child, spouse or partner of a person who is a member of the armed forces serving outside of the UK they will be exempt from the requirement to be ordinarily resident in England for the three years prior to the start of their course.

The RSS application process in 2013/14

6. Where possible, young people should apply for RSS before their course starts. To apply, they must have an unconditional offer of a place.

7. Applications may be made after the course has started but awards will only be backdated to the beginning of the term in which the application was made.

8. The young person should complete the RSS application form for 2013/14 (which they can obtain from the Learner Support Service or from their chosen institution – see the 'Further Information' section below) and pass it to their institution.

9. The institution must seek confirmation from the young person's home local authority that a similar course is not available locally to the student's home address. Paragraph 4g confirms the definition of 'locally available'. The institution must complete the declaration on the application form, including the contact details of who has been consulted, and pass the form back to the young person. If the institution identifies that the young person is a dependent of a member of the armed forces posted overseas (see paragraph 5), they should contact the Learner Support Service for advice.

10. The young person should then send the form and the supporting evidence required to the Learner Support Service in the pre-paid envelope provided in the application pack. Should the pre-paid envelope be lost, the return address is also set out below:

Freepost RSLX-CAZR RHLV
Learner Support Service
Birmingham B24 9FD

11. **The young person must include a copy of their tenancy agreement with their application form.** This must have been agreed and signed and include the following information:

- the young person's name;
- the dates of the tenancy;
- the young person's term time address;
- the landlord's name, address and signature (please note: the landlord cannot be related to the young person);
- the cost of the rent.

The young person's term time lodgings must be no further than 15 miles from their institution.

12. If the young person does not send a tenancy agreement with their application only a provisional Notice of Entitlement (NoE) will be issued by the Learner Support Service. Final eligibility will only be confirmed once the tenancy agreement has been received by the Learner Support Service; **no payments will be released before this.**

13. Once the young person's RSS application has been assessed, the Learner Support Service will write to the young person and the institution to notify them of the outcome.

Payments and monitoring

14. The Learner Support Service will send payments to institutions at the beginning of each term for the institution to pay the young person's landlord or agency directly. Institutions must retain proof of payment.

15. If the young person has already paid the rent, institutions may refund their costs (but this must be within the period agreed in the RSS award). Again, they should retain proof of payment.

16. The attendance of RSS-supported students is monitored by the Learner Support Service via the remittance advice and AS1 reports which the Learner Support Service will send to institutions for completion. It is the responsibility of the young person and/or institution to notify the Learner Support Service of non-attendance and the potential stoppage of payments. If the Learner Support Service identifies that the young person has left the course, they will calculate any potential overpayment and attempt to recover funds from the institution or, if the institution has notified the Learner Support Service that payment has already been made to the landlord, from the young person.

Institutions with Residential Bursary Funding

17. A small number of institutions are not part of RSS; instead they operate the Residential Bursary Fund (RBF). Young people at these institutions should not apply for RSS support but should apply directly to their chosen institution for help with residential costs. A list of institutions with RBF allocations in 2013/14 can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentssupport/a00203151/residential>

Further Information

18. For help and advice:
 - Stakeholders can call the Learner Support Provider helpline on **0300 303 8610** or e-mail: rss@efalearnersupport.co.uk
 - Young people can call the Learner Support student helpline on **0800 121 8989**
19. For application packs:
 - Institutions can order application packs in bulk from Prolog by calling **0300 790 6235** quoting reference number EFA-RSS-2013/14
 - Young people can order a pack from the Learner Support Service by calling the Learner Support student helpline on the number above.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at residentialsupport.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk

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