

## **Policy 013: Hardship and Travel Bursary Funding**

### **1. Purpose and Scope**

1.1 This policy describes the overarching guidelines for the assessment and disbursement of Hardship funding, travel bursaries and discretionary funding to support students at the Academy of Contemporary Music.

1.2 This policy applies to all students, and is designed to ensure that students are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

1.3 The content of this policy aligns with the regulations of ACM's validating partners, student Finance England and any other external stakeholders to whom ACM must make reference.

### **2. Policy Statement**

2.1 The Academy of Contemporary Music is committed to providing support to students who wish to develop their skills and knowledge by initiating study or to continue with existing study.

2.2 The limited hardship funds that the Academy of Contemporary Music has available will provide assistance to those who are identified through staff referral or self referral. Students who are referred are considered to be in need of short term financial assistance, to ensure the widest participation of students to our programmes. Travel Bursaries and Discretionary Funding are not loans, and do not require repayment of funds, however, Hardship Funds operate as loans and a mutually acceptable payment plan must be agreed by ACM and the loan recipient (student) prior to agreement of a student's application.

2.3 A **Travel Bursary** is to assist Further Education (Diploma) students in financial difficulties specifically with their travel costs associated with the prohibitive costs of travelling to and from ACM. Evidence of hardship must be demonstrated and back payment will be paid for the current academic year of application, if requested at the point of application.

2.4 **Hardship** funds are allocated to allow all students to meet their financial obligations in the event of exceptional funding difficulties.

2.5 **Discretionary** funds are available to help students in emergency situations for essential weekly costs. Essential is defined as essential to living (food and travel costs). Discretionary funds are assessed by Student Services staff. The discretionary fund can be accessed by a student up to a maximum of three times in an academic year.

2.6 To make an application to either the ACM Travel Bursary Fund or the ACM Hardship Fund applicants must meet specific criteria for which individual guidelines are provided on request from Student Services. The guidelines have been produced to support this Policy and align with its content.

2.7 The policy and allocation of the funds are approved by the Head of Student Services and Group Head of Finance

2.8 All applications will be assessed by a member of Student Services and reviewed by Finance. A referral and application is made to the Head of Student Services who will review

all applications and evidence.

2.9 An appeal can be made to the Group Head of Finance. A decision on hardship, travel and discretionary funds aims to be resolved within 5 working days of the application being received.

2.10 Where a student has not demonstrated need due to insufficient or non conclusive evidence no funds will be allocated. This is applicable to:

- (a) Travel Bursaries
- (b) Hardship Funds
- (c) Discretionary Funds

2.11 A student may request for a review of their application if they are able to supply further supporting evidence in addition to their bursary claim.

### **3. Responsible Parties**

3.1 The policy lead is responsible for the cyclical monitoring and review of the policy in liaison with the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager. The Hardship and Travel Bursary Funding Policy lead is:

- Head of Student Services

3.2 Decisions and appropriate actions in support of the implementation of the Policy will be authorised by the following designated staff:

- Group Head of Finance
- Head of Student Services
- Student Support Officers
- Education Guidance Team
- Student Finance Manager

### **4. Reference Points**

#### **4.1. Internal:**

- Student Debt Management
- Equality and Diversity
- Finance Policy
- Appeals and Complaints

#### **4.2. External:**

- Student Finance England 2015 - 2017 Guidelines
- QAA Quality Code Chapter B4: Enabling Student Achievement

### **5. Date of Approval and Next Review**

Version: 1.1

Approved on: 28 Jul 2017

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Approved by: Academic Board

Next Review: 01 Aug 2018