

INTRODUCTION

Financing your way through college can be a tough assignment. Many students are finding it difficult to manage financially. Government funding for students is rarely enough to get by on.

In order to survive through your time at University, you may need to earn some cash through employment. Don't forget any income you earn through employment will not affect any grant or loan entitlement but if you are receiving any welfare benefits, it may affect your eligibility for these. The aim of this guide is to provide some general information on areas that you may need to think about or be aware of.

LOOKING INTO OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCE

To decide whether to start working part time will be a difficult decision for a number of students, purely because it may affect their academic studies. Finding work hours to fit around your college time table and private study is difficult - you will need to strike a balance to suit your needs.

It may be an idea to look into other possible sources of finances instead of working part time, for example:

THE STUDENT LOAN

This is a scheme set up by the Government to offer students a Government funded loan to help them meet their everyday living costs. Have you taken advantage of it? If not, more information is available from the Advice and Support Centre and the Higher Education Shop on Lichfield Street.

ACCESS TO LEARNING FUND (ALF)

Access to Learning Funds are available to provide financial help to students where access to higher education may be inhibited by financial constraints if for whatever reason, including physical or other disability they face financial hardship/difficulty. You need to have exhausted all other financial means i.e. overdraft, student loan etc., before applying to the Access to Learning Fund. The Fund is available to both full time and part-time home students;

however, part time students must be working towards a minimum of 60 credits (or 30 credits if the student is disabled).

BENEFITS

The majority of full-time students are not eligible to claim Welfare Benefits e.g. (Income Support, Housing Benefit, Job Seekers Allowance). The following groups are exceptions to the rule:

- Single Parents
- Students regarded as disabled by the government
- Students who are of pensionable age
- Couples with a dependant child, where parents are students
- Part-time students – studying fewer than 16 hours per week

Part-time students will be able to apply for welfare benefits but a partner's earnings will be taken into account.

If you are eligible to claim any benefits, your claim will be affected if you have capital or savings over £6,000 for both Income Support and Housing Benefit. If your capital/savings exceed £16,000 you will no longer be entitled to Income Support or Housing Benefit.

Benefits are calculated by comparing your income to levels set by the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP). Income includes your loan (less a fixed amount for books and travel), which is divided by the number of weeks in the academic year. For benefit purposes this is regarded as the beginning of September to the end of June.

Dependant's Grant and Parent's Learning Allowance are not counted as income for benefit purposes. Neither is the HE grant for old system students or the University Bursary for new system students.

CHARITIES AND TRUST FUNDS

There are a number of educational trust funds and charities available, which may be able to supply a degree of financial support for students in certain predicaments. Most have specific criteria such as age/gender/nationality/marital status/course/field of study. The help available is purely discretionary and students may not get

help even if they fit all the criteria. It may also be an idea to try surfing the net for sponsorship ideas.

See the Advice and Support Centre Charities and Trust Funds leaflet for further information.

PART-TIME WORK

In order to assist with your funding during University, it is possible for most undergraduate students both international and home students to acquire part-time work during their studies.

The University of Wolverhampton and the National Unions of Students (NUS) both recommend that you should work no more than 20 hours each week in order to avoid detrimental effects on your studies.

International Students permitted to work by their student visa are only allowed to work 20 hours per week in term, time please refer to the International Students booklet for further information on working whilst studying at the University of Wolverhampton.

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

E.G. Alfred Marks Recruitment Bureau
Brook Street
Pertemps
Kelly Services
Adecco
Extra Personnel

Temporary holiday employment through agencies often gets snapped up quickly at the beginning of vacation periods so you may have to act quickly to get the best chance of work.

The Students' Union employs casual staff. If you are interested, pick up an application form from any Students' Union Reception.

The Job Centre also has a number of casual jobs advertised - pop in and have a look at what's on offer.

Now, let's get down to the nitty gritty!

WHERE CAN YOU FIND THE IDEAL PART-TIME JOB?

There are various sources that can provide you with that ideal job. You could search the local newspapers, the Express and Star and Birmingham Evening Mail (Thursday evenings), or you could visit the University's The Workplace for full-time, part-time, seasonal vacancies and placements. Located in MD Building, City Campus, telephone 01902 323400 or email theworkplace@wlv.ac.uk to register.

Another effective method of acquiring part-time job information is to speak to other students who may have relevant knowledge as to the availability of jobs.

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY CAREERS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES?

It is a free service, run for students of the University of Wolverhampton. In the "Workplace" they advertise a range of part-time and vacation employment suitable for all full-time and part-time students based at any of our four campuses, i.e., Wolverhampton, Compton, Walsall, and Telford.

The vacancies they receive vary from short term, one-off jobs to permanent part-time posts and they range from the usual bar work to general office work or market research.

The University has recognised that for many students, finances will cause a major problem, therefore they aim to find suitable part-time work for everyone who registers with them. However, paying your bills is not the only benefit, as you gain valuable experience from seemingly "run-of-the-mill" jobs.

Giving credit where it is due, through the Supervised Work Experience module or Independent Learning in the work place module can earn you credits for your degree. Participating in such a module will no doubt, show future employers that you have that little extra knowledge to set you apart from the rest.

CAREERS CENTRE

Student Gateway, MB Building, Tel: 01902 321414,
www.wlv.ac.uk/careers

They offer careers information and research, guidance, help with your career plans, support with your CV and applications and help with preparation for interviews.

THE STAFF

The staff members at the Careers Centre and The Workplace are very dedicated to helping you find that suitable job. They consider themselves as the "link" between you the students and the employers. They also provide a friendly atmosphere in order to provide a comfortable environment for all jobseekers.

INCOME TAX

Income Tax is your contribution to Government spending. Everyone who earns or receives income over a certain amount in the tax year (April to April) pays Income Tax.

Your student loan and dependants grants are not taxable, neither are scholarships and most research awards.

Your earnings from full or part-time work, including tips and bonuses, are taxable.

Do I have to pay tax on all my taxable income?

The answer is "No"! Everyone can earn or receive an amount of income in each tax year before paying tax. This is called the personal tax allowance (2007/08, £5,220). If your income is below that in the tax year, you won't have to pay any tax. There are other allowances you may be entitled to. Leaflet IR90 "Tax Allowances and Relief" gives more information.

If you think that your total taxable income in the tax year is likely to be less than your personal allowance, you need to inform your employer and ask for a P38(s) form (these are available from the Advice and Support Centre) which will need to be filled in. Upon receipt of this, your employer should pay you without deducting tax. If however, any tax is deducted, your employer will refund it later - you will need to fill out a P50 for a rebate of overpaid taxes.

If your total income is more than the personal allowance, you will have to pay tax on the difference between the two amounts. Your employer will deduct tax under PAYE (Pay As You Earn scheme).

IF YOU HAVE MORE THAN ONE JOB

If you have more than one job, you will get a separate PAYE code for each job.

If you would like more information on the mind-boggling tax system, then the contact the Advice and Support Centre.

NATIONAL INSURANCE

Most people who work must pay National Insurance contributions.

You cannot work without a National Insurance number. To get one, telephone for application form on 0845 600 0643 between 8.00am and 8.00pm, Monday to Friday.

If you are hard of hearing, or have speech difficulties, call textphone on 0845 600 0644.

More information is available from the Advice and Support Centre.

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

The rights you have as an employee partly depend on your contract of employment which will outline the work you are expected to do and your employers' responsibilities towards you, the employee. However, you have some statutory rights regardless of what is stated in your contract. Statutory rights are usually based on how many hours per week you work and how long you have worked for an employer.

The statutory rights you have from immediate effect are that the employer should provide you with a written statement of the terms and conditions of your employment within two months of you starting work. Your employer should also provide you with an accurate pay slip or statement detailing how your money is made up and any deductions for tax and National Insurance contributions.

You will also be covered by the provisions against unlawful discrimination in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Race Relations Act 1976.

If you are experiencing any problems with your employers, seek advice as soon as possible from the Advice and Support Centre. We also sign post you to solicitors who may be able to give free legal advice.

LEAVING A JOB

If you leave your job, the employer should give you a P45. The P45 gives details of the employer's tax office, the employer's tax

reference number, the employee's tax code and total amount of pay and tax deducted during the current tax year.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

It is important that you check whether you are allowed to work in the UK, further information is available from the Advice and Support Centre you can either ask to see the International Student Adviser, or pick up our booklet "International Students".

Working without permission of the government is a breach of your conditions of stay and a criminal offence. Further information is available from the Advice and Support Centre.

Dependants of overseas students are allowed to work unless they are prohibited but will also need to seek a National Insurance number. For further information check the "International Students' Leaflet.