

## Aston University Home and EU student Scholarships Policy 2012/13

### 1 Purpose and Scope

1.1 This document outlines the eligibility and assessment criteria for students to receive Scholarships from Aston University as part of the Higher Education funding arrangements for undergraduate students starting degree courses in 2012/13. This policy is correct at the time of publishing but will be reviewed annually and is subject to change.

### 2. Glossary

These meanings apply only to Aston University Home and EU Scholarship Policy 2012/13 and may not hold the same meanings or be interpreted in the same way in other documents.

#### 2.1 Home student

This is a student who qualifies to be considered for a tuition fee loan **and** grants and loans for living costs from the UK government. These students cannot be charged more than £9,000 for their tuition fees. The rules about who qualifies as a home student are very complicated and depend on nationality, the immigration status of you and your family members and where you have been living.

#### 2.2 EU student

This is a student who is an EU national (or the relevant family member of an EU national) and who qualifies to be considered for a tuition fee loan from the UK government. These students cannot be charged more than £9,000 for their tuition fees. The rules about who qualifies as an EU student are complicated and depend on the immigration status of you and your family members and where you have all been living.

#### 2.3 Aston Scholarship.

There are two types of Aston Scholarship. The first are not assessed on household income and are approved on the basis of academic excellence or placement details. These are the Aston Excellence Scholarship and the Aston Placement Scholarship. The second are approved based on the household income. These are the National Scholarship Programme awards, Aston Advantage Scholarship and the Aston Progression Scholarship.

#### 2.4 Equivalent Level Qualification.

A student has an Equivalent Level Qualification if they already hold an awarded qualification which is at the same level as or is higher than the course they will be studying at Aston University.

#### 2.5 Student Finance England

This is the organisation that assesses and awards student funding from the UK government to Home students who live in England.

#### 2.6 Student Finance Wales

This is the organisation that assesses and awards student funding from the UK government to Home students who live in Wales.

#### 2.7 Student Finance Northern Ireland

This is the organisation that assesses and awards student funding from the UK government to Home students who live in Northern Ireland.

## 2.8 Student Awards Agency for Scotland

This is the organisation that assesses and awards student funding from the UK government to Home students who live in Scotland. This organisation also assesses and awards student funding from the UK government to EU students who study in Scotland.

## 2.9 Student Finance Services

This is the organisation that assesses and awards student funding from the UK government to EU students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is also sometimes known as the EU team or the European Services Team.

## 2.10 Student Loans Company

This is the organisation that manages the payment and repayment of loans and grants for student support funding. This organisation is also responsible for collating information about household income and sharing this information with Universities for bursary and Scholarship assessments.

## 2.11 UCAS

This stands for the University and Colleges Admission System. It is the system students use to apply for places at Universities and Colleges in the UK.

## 2.12 Household Income

This is the household income as calculated by the relevant funding authority for a student's application for student funding from the UK government. It is not possible for Aston University to accept any alternative assessment method of a student's household income.

## 2.13 Sandwich placement year

This is a period of industrial, professional, linguistic or occupational training /work experience or study abroad which is approved by the University and forms part of the assessment for a sandwich degree or language degree at Aston University. Sometimes a student is paid during their placement for the work they do by their placement employer which is called a paid placement. In other cases, students do not receive any money from their placement employer for their work and this is called an unpaid placement. If the placement takes place outside of the UK then it is considered to be a work or study placement overseas.

## 2.14 ERASMUS fee waivers

Students who undertake a work or study placement outside of the UK but within the EEA may qualify for financial help from an organisation called ERASMUS. In some cases, ERASMUS will pay the student's tuition fees for their placement year and this is called an ERASMUS fee waiver.

## 2.15 Academic Year

This is the period over which Aston University teaches a course. For most undergraduate courses, this normally begins at the start of October and ends in the middle of June.

## 2.16 Repeating studies without attendance

This is when a student has to retake exams, assessments in the following year but is not required to attend any of the lectures, classes and tutorials for those modules.

## 2.17 Repeating studies with attendance

This is when a student has to retake exams, assessments in the following year and is required to attend all of the lectures, classes and tutorials for those modules.

#### 2.18 Repeating studies with partial attendance

This is when a student has to retake exams, assessments in the following year and is required to attend some of the lectures, classes and tutorials for those modules.

#### 2.19 Deferred studies

This is when exams and/or assessments are delayed until the next exam period.

#### 2.20 Repeating studies as if for the first time

This is when exams, assessments or modules are retaken but are treated as a first attempt and the mark the student receives is not limited to the pass mark.

#### 2.21 Attendance

For the purposes of Aston Scholarship approvals, a student is considered to be in attendance if Aston University's student records systems show that they are a current student.

#### 2.22 Suspending studies (Leave of Absence)

This is when a student stops their studies for a period (normally longer than 60 days) for reasons such as illness. This is also sometimes called a Leave of Absence.

#### 2.23 Maintenance grant

This is a grant for living costs from the UK Government which is assessed and awarded by Student Finance England. Students cannot receive the Maintenance Grant and the Special Support Grant at the same time.

#### 2.24 Special Support Grant

This is a grant for living costs from the UK Government which is for students who have an entitlement to receive Social Security Benefits (for example they have children or are disabled). It is assessed and awarded by Student Finance England. Students cannot receive the Special Support Grant and the Maintenance Grant at the same time.

#### 2.25 Satisfactory Academic Performance

For the purposes of Aston Scholarship approvals, a student is considered to have a satisfactory academic performance if they are starting the first year of their programme or they have been considered by an Exam Board to have passed and to be eligible to progress into the next stage of study.

#### 2.26 My Aston Portal (MAP)

This is the Aston University online student portal through which students can view and update personal information and find information about their programme. Students will be able to access information about the progress of Aston Scholarship assessments and approvals from their student homepage on MAP.

### 3 General Provisions

3.1 A student who does not have an Equivalent Level Qualification qualifies to be considered for an Aston Scholarship if:

- (a) the student will start a new full time undergraduate degree course at Aston University on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012 **and**
- (b) the student will be liable to pay tuition fees of £9,000 or £1,000 in the placement year **and**
- (c) the student qualifies to receive Student Support funding as part of the finance arrangements for new students starting their degree courses on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012 **and**

Aston University Scholarships programme version 1.12 22/09/2012

(d) the student is not a resident of the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man (unless the student is entitled to benefit from European Community provisions relating to employment or establishment and is in receipt of UK Student Support funding as a home or EU student).

3.2 A student who has an Equivalent Level Qualification only qualifies to be considered for an Aston Scholarship based on achievement (Aston Excellence Scholarship) if:

(a) the student will start a new full time undergraduate degree course at Aston University on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012 **and**

(b) the student will be liable to pay tuition fees of £10,500 or £1,000 in the placement year **and**

(e) the student is not a resident of the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man (unless the student is entitled to benefit from European Community provisions relating to employment or establishment).

3.3 The household income thresholds used to assess eligibility for award of a Scholarship assessed on household income will be reviewed annually.

3.4 A student will not be entitled to receive a Scholarship in any academic year for which they do not have to pay tuition fees (for example ERASMUS fee waivers, deferred studies, repeating as if for the first time).

3.5 With the exception of a placement year, a student will not be eligible to be considered for an Aston Scholarship assessed on household income for an academic year unless they have made an application to be income assessed for the same year by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland, Student Awards Agency for Scotland or Student Finance Services.

#### 4. Assessing and awarding

4.1 A student's Scholarship eligibility will be assessed and approved on an annual basis. Receipt of any Scholarship in any year of the programme does not necessarily guarantee approval of a Scholarship in subsequent years except where a student qualifies for a placement year Scholarship as the result of having been previously approved for another Scholarship.

4.2 Eligible students will not need to apply to Aston University to be assessed for a Scholarship because Aston University will use UCAS data, household income information provided by the Student Loans Company and information held on university records for placement years to determine awards.

4.3 Students can only be assessed for each type of Aston Scholarship once in an academic year. Scholarship entitlement will normally be assessed and approved at the end of November using the information that is available to Aston University at that time. Any Scholarship assessments which cannot be considered at the end of November will be reviewed on a monthly basis until all relevant information has been received and the student's Scholarship entitlement can be assessed and approved. It is not normally possible to consider a student for an award of an Aston Scholarship after 30<sup>th</sup> May of the academic year in question, even if a student's circumstances change.

4.4 The Student Loans Company charges interest on tuition fee loans at a daily rate from the date payments are made to Universities. Aston University cannot accept any responsibility for interest applied to tuition fee loans by the Student Loans Company.

4.5 Eligibility for an Aston Scholarship based on achievement (Aston Excellence Scholarship) will normally be assessed on the basis of information provided by UCAS. Approvals of Aston Scholarships based on achievement will be communicated to students as part of their Unconditional Offer. Information will also be available through the student homepage on MAP (My Aston Portal). Notification will be sent to the Student Loans Company about fee discounts and changes in tuition fee liability as soon as possible after the Scholarship has been approved.

4.6 Eligibility for a Scholarship assessed on household income will be considered on the basis of information provided by the Student Loans Company. Aston University aims to consider and approve Scholarships based on household income within 8 weeks of receiving household income information from the Student Loans Company. National Scholarship Programme awards will be approved after the start of term three. Any student who is approved for an income assessed Scholarship will be notified via MAP. Notification will be sent to the Student Loans Company about fee discounts and changes in tuition fee liability as soon as possible after the Scholarship has been approved.

4.7 Eligibility for a Scholarship during a placement year will be assessed on the basis of information held on University records about previous Scholarship approvals and placement details. Approval of Scholarships for placement years will be communicated to students via MAP at the start of the academic year or when placement details have been confirmed. Notification will be sent to the Student Loans Company about fee discounts and changes in tuition fee liability as soon as possible after the Scholarship has been approved.

4.8 Where a student has not taken out a Tuition Fee Loan and has made arrangements to pay their tuition fees to Aston University directly, the student may request a refund of any amount of tuition fee that they have overpaid.

4.9 Aston Scholarships will normally only be available to students who have been in attendance as defined by the University throughout term 1 and term 2 and is still in attendance at the start of term three. Students who withdraw from Aston University part way through an academic year will not be eligible to receive a Scholarship in respect of that year.

4.10 Students who are repeating their studies are not eligible for Scholarships regardless of whether they are repeating with attendance, without attendance or with partial attendance.

4.11 Where a student suspends their studies and takes a Leave of Absence for a complete Academic year (i.e. October- October) no tuition fee is charged and, therefore, the student will not be eligible to receive a Scholarship. Students who suspend their studies and suspend their studies part way through an academic year will be eligible to receive a Scholarship for the terms they have completed in full. The amount of Scholarship will be approved on a pro rata basis and in line with Aston University's Tuition Fees Charging Policy. Students who suspend their studies and return from a suspension of studies part way through an academic year will only be eligible to receive Scholarship for the terms they will complete in full. The amount of Scholarship will be approved on a pro rata basis and in line with Aston University's Tuition Fees Charging Policy

## 5. Eligibility criteria for Aston University Scholarships

Aston University offers two Scholarship packages. The first Scholarship package is not assessed on household income and is approved on the basis of academic excellence or placement details. The second Scholarship package is assessed and approved based on the household income as calculated by the Student Loans Company

Aston University Scholarships programme version 1.12 22/09/2012

## Scholarships that are not assessed on household income.

### 5.1 Aston Excellence Scholarship

5.1.1 A student is eligible to receive an Aston Excellence Scholarship if:

- (a) the student meets the general provisions outlined in paragraph 3.1 or 3.2 **and**
- (b) the student has achieved grades AAB + in their A levels (or equivalent qualifications as outlined in Appendix One). The grades refer to the student's highest qualifications, not their entry qualifications.

5.1.2 A student who is awarded an Aston Excellence Scholarship and does not have an Equivalent Level Qualification will be eligible to receive:

- (a) a £1,000 tuition fee discount for each year of study where a £9,000 tuition fee is charged to the student **and**
- (b) a £1,000 tuition fee discount where the student undertakes a placement year as part of their degree programme and where a £1,000 placement tuition fee is charged to the student.

5.1.3 A student who is awarded an Aston Excellence Scholarship and has an Equivalent Level Qualification will be eligible to receive:

- (a) a £1,000 tuition fee discount for each year of study where a £10,500 tuition fee is charged to the student **and**
- (b) a £1,000 tuition fee discount where the student undertakes a placement year as part of their degree programme and where a £1,000 placement tuition fee is charged to the student.

5.1.4 A student who is awarded an Aston Excellence Scholarship can also be considered for Scholarships assessed on household income for the same academic year.

5.1.5 A student can only be awarded one fee discount Scholarship for the placement year so students cannot receive any other placement fee discounts in addition to this award.

### 5.2 Aston Placement Scholarship

5.2.1 A student is eligible to receive an Aston Placement Scholarship if:

- (a) the student meets the general provisions outlined in paragraph 3.1 **and**
  - (b) the student is undertaking an unpaid placement for their sandwich placement year
- or**
- (c) the student is undertaking a work or study placement overseas.

5.2.2 A student who is awarded an Aston Placement Scholarship will be eligible to receive:

- (a) a £1,000 tuition fee discount during their placement year where a tuition fee of £1,000 is charged to the student.

5.2.3 A student can only be awarded one fee discount Scholarship for the placement year so students cannot receive any other placement fee discounts in addition to this award.

## Scholarships that are assessed on household income.

### 5.3 National Scholarship Programme

National Scholarship Programme Scholarships are targeted at:

- English students in receipt of funding through Student Finance England and
- who have been assessed by Student Finance England to have a household income up to and including £14,500
- and are living in University accommodation on campus or who have identified that they are a Care Leaver on their UCAS application form.

5.3.1 A student is eligible to receive a National Scholarship Programme award if:

- (a) the student meets the general provisions outlined in paragraph 3.1 **and**
- (b) the student receives funding as a “home student” through Student Finance England **and**
- (c) the student is in receipt of an amount of Maintenance Grant or Special Support Grant from Student Finance England for the current academic year **and**

(d) the student has currently been assessed by Student Finance England to have a household income of up to and including £14,500 **and has either:**

- (e) lived in University accommodation on campus for the full duration of their first year, has paid their residence fees and is still resident in University accommodation at the start of term three **or**
- (f) has identified that they are a Care Leaver on their UCAS application form

5.3.2 A student who is awarded a National Scholarship Programme award will be eligible to receive:

- (a) a £3,000 tuition fee discount for the first year of the course where a £9,000 tuition fee is charged to the student **and**
- (b) a £1,000 tuition fee discount where the student undertakes a placement year as part of their degree programme and where a placement tuition fee of £1,000 is charged to the student.

5.3.3 A student who has previously received a National Scholarship Programme award in their first year of study can be considered for the Aston Progression Scholarship as relevant in later years of study on the course (see 3.1).

5.3.4 A student can only be awarded one fee discount Scholarship for the placement year so students cannot receive any other placement fee discounts in addition to this award.

### 5.4 Aston Advantage Scholarship

Aston Advantage Scholarships are targeted at Home and EU students who have been assessed by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland, Student Awards Agency for Scotland or Student Finance Services to have a household income up to and including £18,000 and are not in receipt of a National Scholarship Programme award.

5.4.1 A student is eligible to receive an Aston Advantage Scholarship if:

- (a) the student meets the general provisions outlined in paragraph 3.1 **and**

(b) the student receives funding as a “home” student through Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland, Student Awards Agency for Scotland **or** has been awarded a tuition fee loan as an EU student through Student Finance Services **and**

(c) the student has currently been assessed by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland, Student Awards Agency for Scotland or Student Finance Services to have a household income of up to and including £18,000 **and**

(d) the student has not received a National Scholarship Programme Award

5.4.2 A student who is awarded an Aston Advantage Scholarship will be eligible to receive:

(a) a £1,000 tuition fee discount for the first year of the course where a £9,000 tuition fee is charged to the student **and**

(b) a £1,000 tuition fee waiver where the student undertakes a placement year as part of their degree programme and where a placement tuition fee of £1,000 is charged to the student.

5.4.4 A student who has previously received an Aston Advantage Scholarship in their first year of study can be considered for the Aston Progression Scholarship as relevant in later years of study on the course (see 3.1).

5.4.5 A student can only be awarded one fee discount Scholarship for the placement year so students cannot receive any other placement fee discounts in addition to this award.

## 5.5 Aston Progression Scholarship

Aston Progression Scholarships are targeted at Home and EU students who have been assessed by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland, Student Awards Agency for Scotland or Student Finance Services to have a household income up to and including £42,000 and are not in receipt of a National Scholarship Programme award or Aston Advantage Scholarship that academic year.

5.5.1 A student is eligible to receive an Aston Progression Scholarship if:

(a) the student meets the general provisions outlined in paragraph 3.1 **and**

(b) the student receives funding as a “home” student through Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland, Student Awards Agency for Scotland **or** has been awarded a tuition fee loan as an EU student through Student Finance Services **and**

(c) the student has currently been assessed by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland, Student Awards Agency for Scotland or Student Finance Services to have a household income of up to and including £42,000 **and**

(d) the student’s academic performance has been satisfactory **and**

(d) the student has not received a National Scholarship Programme Award or an Aston Advantage Scholarship in respect of the same academic year.

5.5.2 A student who is awarded an Aston Progression Scholarship will be eligible to receive:

(a) a £500 tuition fee discount for each year of study where a tuition fee of £9,000 is charged to the student.

5.5.3 For the purposes of assessing and approving Aston Progression Scholarships, a student’s academic progress will be deemed to be satisfactory if a student:

(a) is in their first year **or**

(b) is not in the first year and has been considered by an Exam Board to have passed and to be eligible to progress into the next stage of study.

Aston University Scholarships programme version 1.12 22/09/2012

## **Appendix One**

### **AAB+ equivalences for the purposes of assessing eligibility for an Aston Excellence Scholarship.**

UK and EU undergraduate students starting degree courses in 2012/13 holding at least one of the following qualification/grade combinations will be eligible to be considered for an Aston Excellence Scholarship. These equivalences are dictated in by Government guidelines on allocating funded places for undergraduate students at UK universities in 2012/13. Aston University is not able to consider other alternative qualifications or perceived grades.

#### **Best three A-levels (including VCE advanced) or best three Scottish Advanced Highers), grades are either:**

- A\*, A\*, A\*
- A\*, A\*, A
- A\*, A, A
- A\*, A\*, B
- A, A, A
- A\*, A, B
- A\*, A\*, C
- A, A, B
- A\*, A\*, D
- A\*, A, C
- A\*, B, B
- A\*, A\* and an A at AS-level

A Double Award A-level counts as two single awards at the grade awarded.

#### **A BTEC National with a grade of:**

- Distinction\*, Distinction\*, Distinction\*
- Distinction\*, Distinction\*, Distinction
- Distinction\*, Distinction, Distinction
- Distinction, Distinction, Distinction

**Grade A from a CACHE Level 3 diploma in Child Care and Education.**

**Grade D1 from an OCR National Extended Diploma.**

**A distinction from a NPTC Level 3 Land Based Extended Diploma.**

**Grade A\* from a Progression Diploma.**

#### **Best five Scottish Highers, grades are either:**

- A, A, A, A, A
- A, A, A, A, B
- A, A, A, B, B
- A, A, A, A, C
- A, B, B, B, B
- A, A, B, B, C
- A, A, B, B, B
- A, A, A, A, D
- A, A, A, B, C
- A, A, A, C, C
- A, A, A, B, D

**International Baccalaureate with 35 points or more.**

**Best four Irish Leaving Certificates, grades are either:**

— A1, A1, A1, A1

— A1, A1, A1, B1

— A1, A1, A1, A2

**A postgraduate research degree.**

**A postgraduate taught degree.**

**A first degree.**