Fund for Students with Disabilities
Guidelines for Higher Education Institutions
2018
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PART A
PURPOSE OF THE FUND AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS
A1 Introduction

The Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD) provides funding to higher and further education institutions to provide supports and services to ensure that eligible learners with disabilities can participate on an equal basis with their peers. The Fund has been in place since 1994 and since 2003 has been managed by the HEA on behalf of the Department of Education & Skills. The Fund operates in addition to the legal framework supporting the rights of students with disabilities to access further and higher education. The FSD also operates in addition to mainstream resources and services in place in higher education institutions.

Along with the Student Assistance Fund, the FSD supports the implementation of Ireland’s National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019. The FSD is also part of broader Europe-wide efforts to support inclusion in education and training and is co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) [http://www.esf.ie/en](http://www.esf.ie/en)

These guidelines provide the following:
- An outline of the legal obligations of service providers.
- How to apply – eligibility and expenditure requirements
- Guidance on FSD services and accommodations
- Eligibility Criteria for Support
- Allocation of funding
- Third Level Access (TLA) ESF Claim
A2 Legal Obligations of Service Providers

Higher education institutions should be aware of the protections afforded to students with disabilities under the Equal Status legislation. For the purposes of the Equal Status Acts 2004-2011, HEIs are service providers and are prohibited from discriminating against any person seeking to access a course\(^1\), benefit or facility on the grounds of disability or any of the eight other discriminatory grounds.

Section 4 of the Equal Status Act prescribes that for the purposes of the Act, discrimination includes a refusal or failure by the provider of a service to do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability by providing special treatment or facilities, if without such special treatment or facilities it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail himself or herself of the service. A refusal or failure to provide the special treatment or facilities shall not be deemed to be reasonable unless such provision would give rise to a cost, other than a nominal cost, to the provider of the service in question. The meaning of nominal cost will depend on the size and resources of the organisation.

Under the principle of vicarious liability, the institution has legal responsibility for the conduct, during their employment, of individual teachers, lecturers and other staff members. The institution is also vicariously liable for discrimination by agents acting on their behalf.

The reasonable accommodation duty is only triggered where there is actual or constructive knowledge of the service user’s disability. Where a service user chooses not to comply with a request for medical evidence/certification of the disability, this may relieve the service provider from their duty to reasonably accommodate.

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\(^1\) Any course provided by the Institution, whether full-time or part-time.
A3  Purpose of the Fund for Students with Disabilities

The purpose of the FSD is to provide resources to further and higher education institutions for the delivery of key service and supports for learners with disabilities on full time courses. The Fund aims to support the personal, educational and professional development of the participating learner and contribute to the achievement of their full potential.

The 2017 FSD review recommends extension of the FSD supports to learners on part-time courses. Under the 2018 allocation institutions are invited to begin preparations for inclusion of learners on part-time courses under the fund and may use their allocations to assist students on part-time courses on a pilot phased approach.

The Fund operates firmly within the context of the wider education policy landscape in Ireland, which emphasises the importance of the system being one in which students of all backgrounds can succeed within the mainstream, including those with disabilities. The Fund is designed to complement rather than substitute for the core system. The funding of the delivery of services and accommodations resourced by the Fund is underpinned by key principles including the shared understanding that the purpose of funded services is to support the development of independent learning; inclusive education environments and an overarching commitment to continuous evaluation and improvement of services to deliver best practice supports for students.
PART B
HOW TO APPLY: ELIGIBILITY AND EXPENDITURE RULES
B1 How to apply for the Fund

Institutions are required to complete a Fund for Students with Disability Resource Allocation Return (FSD RAR) by 31 May 2019 detailing the number of students with disabilities and the services and accommodations they required during the academic year 2018/19. The data in this return will be used to inform the FSD funding allocation for 2020. The template for the FSD RAR will be supplied by the HEA.

(NB The Fund for Students with Disability Resource Allocation Return (FSD RAR) which will inform the 2019 fund allocation was submitted to the HEA in June 2018.)

The Return should reflect FSD student numbers as at 1st March. FSD students who withdraw before that date will be counted for partial support (refer to template guidelines).

B2 Disclosure of Need

The initial decision around disclosure rests with the individual. Where a student discloses to the college, they should be advised per the provisions of the Data Protection Acts 2003-2018, as to any relevant third-party dissemination and should be requested to expressly consent or dissent to same in writing.

B3 Assessment of Need

Prior to requesting supports and services, institutions must complete and document an Assessment of Need in collaboration with the student. (see Sample Template in Appendix 1)

The assessment of need document must be completed for each student included in the FSD Return and should be maintained by the institution for verification and audit by the HEA.

The Assessment of Need is the source document that determines the supports and accommodations that will be requested on the student’s behalf. Students’ participation in the assessment process is essential. It should be noted however that the document is a college document and the college is ultimately responsible for decisions on the most appropriate support plan to meet the needs of the student.

Forms can be designed to protect the students’ identity by using only a number or code during the process of evaluating applications. All information provided by applicants must be held in compliance with data protection legislation.

In addition, supporting documentation must be retained in compliance with ESF retention of records and audit trail guidelines.
Students should be asked to sign a declaration on completion of a FSD application which includes the wording "that all the information provided is true, complete and accurate and that assistance from other sources has not been received for the stated purpose/service which is the subject of this application." ESF logos and recognition of assistance from the ESF should be present on application forms.

**B4 Compliance with Data Protection Requirements**

Applicants should also be informed of the Data Protection implications of providing their personal data. They should be informed that –:

- personal data collected as part of the application process may be processed for the purposes of coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the operation of the Fund and to comply with European Union requirements,
- this personal data may include personally sensitive data where they choose to share that data, and
- their data may be shared with third parties for monitoring and reporting on European Social Fund co-financed activities.

**B5 Who is eligible for support under the Fund?**

To be eligible for support under the Fund for Students with Disabilities, a learner must meet the following conditions:

- have a verifiable disability – please refer to Part D of this document
- meet the nationality and residency criteria as outlined in Appendix 2.
- be a participant on a full-time course or may be a participant on a part-time course under pilot approach for 2018 (see Appendix 3).
- Have a verified need for specific supports to enable attendance on their chosen course.
B6  **Eligible expenditure**

Funding can be used to provide supports and accommodations in any of the following categories:

a. Assistive technology equipment and software;
b. Non-Medical Helpers (e.g. Personal assistance, Notetakers)
c. Academic/learning support
d. Deaf supports (Sign Language Interpreters, Speedtext)
e. Transport support
f. In 2018 supports provided on a pilot basis to include learners on part-time courses

Institutions are required to comply with European and national procurement guidelines when procuring services or accommodations in relation to the FSD.

B7  **Ineligible expenditure**

The Fund does not cover expenditure on any of the following:

- assessment or diagnosis of a disability;
- any medical equipment, assistance or support;
- services that can reasonably be expected to be provided by the institution (e.g. counselling service) or by another agency (e.g. local Health Service);
- course-related equipment, materials or software (i.e. applicable to all students on the course);
- support or assistance provided outside the academic year, or periods during the academic year when the college is closed
- Subsistence, mileage and accommodation costs for personal assistants, note-takers, speed-text operators or ISL interpreters;
- staff training and development; and policy work or research.
B8  Financial and Data Requirements

Financial period for Fund

The financial year for the 2018 Fund is **1 January 2018 – 31st December 2018**.

Financial Reporting Requirements

In line with existing practice, you are asked to maintain full and appropriate records of all transactions and assistance given to each student.

Record-keeping and financial reporting for the FSD are necessary to establish the ongoing position of institutions regarding the allocation of the fund locally and to inform national policy.

Data is also required on the types of cost items for which funding is allocated to students. To support these objectives institutions are required to complete and submit an Annual Expenditure Report 2018 (see Appendix 4).

The Fund for Students with Disabilities is an objective of the Third Level Access activity which is co-funded by the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020. Participation involves compliance with both national and EU reporting requirements, including the completion of annual financial returns by each institution. Please see Appendix 5.

B9  Resource Allocation Return (RAR)

The FSD RAR will be issued electronically by the HEA to the HEIs. Only this return should be used to request funding under the FSD; no other document will be accepted/processed by the HEA. The return should be completed electronically and submitted by email to the HEA by the dates indicated. Submissions of the form in paper format will not be accepted (see Appendix 6).

The RAR will capture total number of eligible students and details of specific requests for supports. These variables will inform the overall funding allocation. Allocations can be used to fund eligible expenditure as set out in B4.

**Note:** the HEA reserves the right to ask for supporting documentation associated with a funding request from the institution, including a copy of the Needs Assessment, Evidence of Disability, Proof that the student meets the Residence/Nationality criteria and confirmation of registration/participation on an approved course. This may be requested as part of an audit, site visit or other quality control measures that may be implemented.
PART C
GUIDANCE ON SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS
This section provides information on the types of services and accommodations that fall within the expenditure scope of the FSD. The FSD Funding form to be completed does not request details for each of the items below, only the larger cost items.

The HEA strongly recommends that institutions take a strategic approach to disability support and plan on an ongoing basis for the delivery of services and accommodations. Such a plan will help to ensure that disability services are as effective as possible in supporting the participation in and completion of the students on their chosen course of study.

Publications, resources and professional training are available that can help advise the development of professional disability services in higher education.2

Only costs associated with the delivery of services and accommodations directly to eligible students are covered under the Fund. Developmental costs are not eligible.

In cases where institutions employ personnel to deliver supports, the contractual relationship and the rights and duties embodied within it are strictly between the individual employee and the institution.

C1  Assistive technology equipment and software

Assistive Technology (AT) is defined as any item, piece of equipment or product system whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customised, that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

C2  Non-Medical Helper

Non-Medical Helper such as a personal assistant (PA) or notetaker provides help to students with disabilities who require help with the logistical and personal care requirements associated with attendance on a course of study. Funding can be used to provide the service to a student during college opening hours and, if required, to assist the student with commuting to and from college. In general, personal assistance is only provided to students with physical/mobility disabilities and blind/visually impaired students who require such assistance to participate in their chosen course of study.

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2 The Role of the Disability Officer and the Disability Service in Higher Education in Ireland (DAWN, AHEAD, 2017) The_Role_of_the_Disability Officer.pdf
Many students with severe physical/mobility disabilities may require a personal assistant for the entire period each day that the student is in college. Other students may only require personal assistance at certain times of the college day. Blind students may require personal assistance for a short period at the beginning of the academic year, until they have familiarised themselves with their surroundings. As the independence of the student is compromised using a PA, the service should only be provided when necessary, and after the full range of options have been explored. Decisions associated with the engagement of a PA are with the college, taking account where appropriate of the student's wishes/preferences.

**Note-takers**

Students with disabilities that affect their ability to record class notes may be eligible for note-taking support. A range of alternative solutions are increasingly in place in education which can reduce the need, partly or fully, for the traditional note-taking approach. Lecturers making notes available to students in advance, preferably online, reduces the need for dedicated note-takers. Recording of lectures or the use of products such as the LiveScribe pen are other options. College disability services should explore all options before recommending the provision of a note-taker. Note-taking is not a substitute for a student’s full participation in each class. Note-taking support can be provided during academic contact hours only.

**C3 Learning Support**

Learning support is important for all students, including those with disabilities. For this group, the development of skills, tools and techniques that minimise or eliminate any barriers presented by the learning environment are particularly critical to student success and progression in higher education and beyond.

In addition to assistive technology, study skills support is the most common category of learning support required by students with learning difficulties. This includes, memorisation, mind mapping, taking notes, writing skills, personal learning strategies. It can be delivered in small groups or individually, and there are an increasing range of online applications/tutorials available. Both study skills support and specialist learning supports may also be needed by students with mental health difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions and those with multiple disabilities.

Funding is not available for the provision of tutorials that are a direct substitute for core teaching where the student is not prevented because of their disability from participating in core lectures or class-wide tutorials. The institution should be satisfied that subject-specific tutorials for which funding is being sought are essential to ensure equity of participation and do not confer an unfair advantage over other students who do not have access to funding for such measures.
C4  Deaf Supports

supports such as irish sign language interpreters and speedtext

Irish Sign Language (ISL) is an official recognised language under Irish Sign Language Act 2017 and is regarded as the first language of its users (the deaf community). ISL interpreters translate between English and the language and vice-versa. ISL can be provided during academic contact hours only.

Speedtext is an electronic class synopsis and note-taking system using two laptops, one for the Deaf or hard-of-hearing person (for real-time display) and the other for the specially trained operator (for input). A speed-text operator is trained in condensing language, thus transmitting the meaning of the points discussed, not the actual word-for-word transcription. Speedtext is not a verbatim service. It is primarily for Deaf/hard-of-hearing person who have a good command of the English language.

Speed-text can be provided during academic contact hours only.

C5  Transport Supports

some students with disabilities have significant, additional travel costs to pay to get to and from college. Funding is available for this purpose primarily for the support of students with physical/mobility difficulties or blind/visually impaired students.

Only in exceptional cases are additional travel costs for students with other types of disabilities eligible under the Fund where a student, because of their disability, incurs additional transport costs in attending college beyond those faced by any student commuting from the same area. In these cases, the funding contribution is limited to the incremental element of the costs relating to one single or return journey per day.

Institutional personnel should be satisfied that the need to avail of the proposed transport and incur additional expenses for the student to participate equitably is supported by the diagnosis in the assessment of disability.

C6  Inclusion of Supports for Learners on Part-time Courses

In 2018 following the recommendation for the inclusion of learners on part-time courses under the Fund, Institutions are permitted to include costs for institutional supports provided for learners on part-time courses. These costs can include pilot projects within institutions to prepare for the full inclusion of learners on part-time courses in the future.
PART D

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SUPPORT
This section applies to eligible students for which a funding request is being made for the first time. The criteria set out in this section are specifically associated with the Fund for Students with Disabilities and colleges should not assume that the same criteria apply in other contexts, e.g. obligations under law.

Funding can be requested for eligible students who have provided evidence of disability documentation that meets the criteria for the Fund as set out below. Responsibility for collecting and screening of the documentation to establish that it meets the criteria is with the college, and such documentation should be retained on-file by the institution.

Acceptable evidence of disability documentation is either:

i) a report that meets the criteria as set out below, or

ii.) apart from specific learning difficulties (Dyslexia and Dyscalculia) and learners with DCD-Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia, the CAO/DARE Evidence of Disability Form that meets the criteria as set out below applies where the student has completed this step as part of a CAO application.

Where the CAO/DARE Evidence of Disability Form is furnished, the requirements as stated on the Form must be met (including that it be accompanied by the qualified health professional’s stamp, business card or headed paper or where the information from the qualified health professional is provided by a GP, it be accompanied by the GP’s stamp, business card or headed paper).

Providers of reports must be appropriately qualified professionals and members of professional/regulatory bodies. Reports should be signed and on headed notepaper.

**A GP’s own diagnosis of a disability/condition is not acceptable as evidence of disability for the purposes of the Fund.**

Please also note the following:

- Where a funding request is based on needs arising from more than one disability, appropriate evidence of disability documentation for each disability must be provided by the student and retained on-file by the institution.

- All institutions should advise applicants and relevant third parties that any medical reports or professional opinions compiled by third parties in support of an application should only contain details relevant to the disability being outlined.

- Disability documentation which has been completed in a language other than English can be submitted, along with an English translation. This translation must be conducted by an individual/organisation that is completely independent of the applicant.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISABILITY</th>
<th>EVIDENCE &amp; ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</th>
<th>AGE OF REPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autistic Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td>A report from a Consultant Psychiatrist OR Psychologist OR Neurologist OR Paediatrician providing a diagnosis of autism.</td>
<td>No age limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention Deficit Disorder</td>
<td>A report from an appropriately qualified Consultant Psychiatrist OR Psychologist OR Neurologist OR Paediatrician providing a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD</td>
<td>No age limit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder | A report from one or more of the following:  
  ▶ Ophthalmologist/Ophthalmic Surgeon providing a diagnosis of severe reduction in vision that cannot be corrected with standard glasses or contact lenses. The diagnosis must be in relation to Best Corrected Visual Acuity or Field of Vision.  
  ▶ A letter from the National Council for the Blind confirming registration  
  ▶ A letter from the principal from a school for the Blind confirming attendance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | No age limit    |
| Blind/Vision Impaired            | A report from one or more of the following:  
  ▶ An audiogram from a professionally qualified Audiologist and/or ENT Consultant, indicating moderate to profound bilateral hearing loss (i.e. above 40dB).  
  ▶ A letter from the principal from a school for the Deaf confirming attendance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No age limit    |
| Deaf/Hard of Hearing             | A report from one or more of the following:  
  ▶ An audiogram from a professionally qualified Audiologist and/or ENT Consultant, indicating moderate to profound bilateral hearing loss (i.e. above 40dB).  
  ▶ A letter from the principal from a school for the Deaf confirming attendance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No age limit    |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISABILITY</th>
<th>EVIDENCE &amp; ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</th>
<th>AGE OF REPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Co-ordination Disorder</td>
<td>A report from a Psychologist OR an Occupational Therapist OR Neurologist diagnosing Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia). The CAO/DARE Evidence of Disability Form is <strong>not</strong> acceptable evidence of disability for this category of disability.</td>
<td>No age limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Condition</td>
<td>A report from a Consultant Psychiatrist or Specialist Registrar</td>
<td>Less than five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(For example, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Clinical Depression, Severe Anxiety, Severe Phobias, OCD, Severe Eating Disorders and Psychosis).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurological Condition</td>
<td>Neurological Conditions: Neurologist OR another relevant Consultant Speech &amp; Language Disabilities: Speech and Language Therapist</td>
<td>No age limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Ongoing Illness</td>
<td>A report, diagnosing a significant ongoing illness such as:</td>
<td>Less than five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diabetes Type 1: Endocrinologist or paediatrician</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cystic Fibrosis: Consultant respiratory physician or pediatrician</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gastroenterology condition: Gastroenterologist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other: Consultant/Consultant Registrar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical/mobility</td>
<td>A report from an Orthopaedic Consultant or other relevant specialist diagnosing a significant physical or mobility difficulty.</td>
<td>No age limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISABILITY</td>
<td>EVIDENCE &amp; ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</td>
<td>AGE OF REPORT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia or Dyscalculia)</td>
<td>The report of a psycho-educational assessment by a Psychologist OR by an assessor (PATOSS accredited) diagnosing a Specific Learning Difficulty. Applicants to the Fund may be asked for their latest assessment scores/educational reports to assist Institutions in determining the appropriate level of support. All tests used in the assessment must be valid, reliable and age appropriate. The CAO/DARE Evidence of Disability Form is not acceptable evidence of disability for this category of disability.</td>
<td>No age limit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
E1 Allocation of funding

A single, annual allocation of FSD Funding will be made to HEIs by the HEA. This allocation will be made as early as possible in the year. No further supplementary allocations will be made.

FSD will be allocated as a block grant to institutions, with the subsequent internal allocation to be managed at the discretion of the institutions, so long as it meets the overall FSD guidelines for eligible and ineligible expenditure at B5 and B6 above.

FSD will be allocated based on student numbers and level of need. A table of FSD student numbers by institution will be circulated each year to all HEIs as part of the HEA system of ensuring consistency.

E2 Unspent balances

Unspent FSD funding from a previous year, may be retained by a HEI for a modest period of time, to be applied towards agreed strategic goals for the provision of services to students with disabilities. In general, retained balances should not exceed c.2% of the overall FSD allocation to the HEI.

E3 Model for Allocating FSD Funding

The approach to the allocation of FSD funding has been developed based on the recommendations of the Review of the Fund for Students with Disabilities (HEA 2017). This approach will provide an increased level of transparency and consistency.

FSD funding in one year will be allocated based on the number of students with disabilities in the preceding year who require support under the following categories as evidenced by a Needs Assessment document:

- Assistive Technology equipment, software and student training
- Non-Medical Helper Support
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Support
- Transport Support
- Academic Learning Support
As part of the implementation of the new funding model, weightings have been applied to types of supports provided, at a range of levels. The census date for count of FSD students is the 1st of March. Each student who is present at this date will count as 1 (before application of weightings). An institution’s percentage share of weighted FSD student numbers will largely determine its share of available FSD grant funding.

As part of further work with Implementation Group for the Review of the FSD, weightings will be developed in line with supports provided, areas under consideration are Assistive Technology and Learning Support categories. Inclusion of allocations for students who withdraw before 1st March, having completed a Needs Assessment and having availed of supports, will also be considered at a reduced weighting.

### Cost Weightings by Type of Support and Level of Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF SUPPORT AND LEVEL OF NEED</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Medical Helper</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf/Hard of Hearing Supports</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FSD Student numbers and data returned will be analysed and converted into weighted student numbers. The weightings will be determined by relative costs of different levels of need.

**The changes in grant funding to each institution as indicated by the transition to the new approach to funding allocation, will be phased in to ensure financial stability.**

**Cash Flow**

A payment profile will be agreed and will comprise a minimum of two payments, reflecting the balance of expenditure – e.g. 50% in first payment and 50% in subsequent payment.
Part F
Third Level Access (TLA) ESF Claim
Actions to develop skills and promote participation in education and training are central elements of ESF co-funded programmes and the objective of data collection is to assess the impact of ESF support.

ESF claims will be made to the European Commission in respect of the Third Level Access activity.

Under the current round of ESF funding, the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020, only direct salary costs plus 40% will be included in claims. Expenditure under the various cost headings of the FSD will not be claimed, as was previously the case.

An ESF TLA claim will comprise of both a non-financial data declaration (see section below on Student Reporting Requirements) and a financial declaration on an annual basis.

Financial declarations will be eligible direct salary costs including Employer PRSI, plus 40%. The declaration will be uploaded onto the e-Cohesion system. A standard template for the return of financial and non-financial data has been developed and can be sourced from the e-cohesion system https://ecohesion.gov.ie/ Eligible direct salary costs include:

- Costs of business trips
- Allowances or salaries disbursed for the benefit of participants (e.g. students, trainees) in ESF operations
- Redundancy or back-pay costs paid to staff that are not related to the eligibility period of the operation being co-funded.
- Pensions Costs (Employee and Employer)

F1 **Student Data Reporting Requirements**

As part of the conditions of co-financing under the ESF PEIL 2014-2020, detailed data will be required on each student who benefits directly from ESF support. The e-Cohesion system supports the return of this data by HEIs. This system was rolled out in 2017 and included testing and training for users. The timelines for this project continue to need to be prioritised to ensure that Ireland doesn't lose any EU funding. Higher education personnel have a key role to play in supporting the implementation and the continued establishment of this system.

A separate line of indicator data is required on each student benefiting from SAF for the purposes of filling in the reporting template in the e-Cohesion system.
Data is gathered on students who are benefitting from the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD) and the Student Assistance Fund (SAF) and ESF data returns for each year should be made up of the participants who’ve benefitted from either Fund.

Where a student benefits from both the SAF and the FSD during their multi-annual higher education programme of study, s/he are only reported once. The commencement date reported shall be the earlier of the SAF and the FSD commencement dates and the completion date shall be the later of the SAF and the FSD completion dates.

The commencement date for student’s benefiting from the SAF/FSD in 2018/2019 academic year should be recorded as their registration date for that academic year, which will generally be in September 2018. A student’s completion date will be the end of the academic year in which they completed the course on which they were enrolled when they first benefitted from the SAF/FSD.

For students supported by the SAF/FSD in the 2018/2019 academic year, the deadline for the return of data will be 1st March 2019.

Appendix 5 provides a summary of the fields of data that require to be gathered by HEIs from each student benefitting from the fund.

More detailed Guidance on the Completion of Financial Declarations and the Non-Financial Indicator Data can be sourced at the following link: https://www.esf.ie/en/Regulations-Guidance/Guidance/

Guidance on the Completion of Non-Financial Indicator Data

F2 ESF Publicity Requirements

The Department of Education & Skills, the HEA, HEIs and any other bodies who implement ESF co-funded programmes, are obliged to ensure that recognition of assistance from the ESF is provided.

The Fund for Students with Disabilities is co-funded by the Department of Education and Skills and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.

This above statement and Ireland’s ESIF logo and the EU Emblem must be used in all FSD information and communication material.
The following are some examples of where ESF assistance should be publicised:

- Application forms
- Student forms of undertaking
- Advertisements
- Speeches, press releases, invitations
- Posters, leaflets, booklets, video covers
- Folders and backdrops for exhibitions, conferences, events, seminars.


Regular checks are carried out to ensure compliance with promotional requirements. **Failure to comply with ESF publicity requirements may lead to financial penalties.**

**Document Retention**

Source documentation from which the final claims and indicator data returns are prepared must be retained in the event of an inspection by the following:

- Higher Education Authority;
- Department of Education and Skills;
- Comptroller and Auditor General;
- ESF Managing Authority
- ESF Control Unit (Audit Authority)
- European Commission;
- European Court of Auditors.

Supporting documentation must be retained in compliance with ESF retention records and audit trail guidelines. Please refer to the following link for further information:

SUBMISSION OF FSD Resource Allocation Return (RAR)

The FSD RAR should be forwarded electronically to: fsd@hea.ie

The HEA will provide ongoing advice and support to institutions and any queries can be directed to Modesta Mawarire (fsd@hea.ie), tel: 01-2317132
Appendix 1
Sample Needs Assessment Form
### Sample Needs Assessment Form

**Nature of Disability**

**Nature of Supports/Assistance Required**

**Non-Medical Support**
- [ ] Personal Assistant

**Deaf/Hard of Hearing Support**
- [ ] Irish Sign Language (ISL) Interpreter
- [ ] Speedtext

**Assistive Technology**
- Hardware e.g. laptop (please specify):
- Software e.g. Audio notetaker, texthelp etc:

**Academic/Learning Support**
- Non-Medical Helper support e.g. Specialist learning supports e.g. for students with SLD, MHC, ASD
- General study support e.g. Study Skills Support

**Transport Cost**

**Alternative Formats**
Appendix 2
Residency, Nationality and Immigration Criteria
Residency
To be eligible for support under the Fund, a student must be legally resident in Ireland for at least 3 of the 5 years up to the day before her/his approved course commences in an approved institution. If the student does not qualify at the beginning of your course, it is possible for her/him to meet this requirement during her/his studies; reviewed at the beginning of an academic year.

Nationality
To qualify the student must be either:

- an Irish national,
- a national of another EU Member State, the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland:

Immigration Status
If one of the nationality categories above does not apply, then the student will need to have:

- been declared a refugee under the Refugees Act 1996, or
- admitted to Ireland as a Programme Refugee, or
- permission to remain in Ireland as a family member of a refugee under section 18 of the Refugee Act 1996, or
- been granted subsidiary protection under the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006, or
- permission in writing to enter and reside in Ireland under Regulation 16 of the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006, or
- permission to remain in the State as a family member of a European Union, EEA or Swiss citizen under the European Communities (Free Movement of Persons) Regulations 2006 and 2008 and EU Directive (EU Treaty Rights provisions), or
- permission to remain because of marriage or civil partnership with an Irish national or because you are the dependent child of such person, or
- humanitarian leave to remain granted before the Immigration Act 1999 came into effect, or
- permission to remain in Ireland following a decision not to deport you under section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999.
Appendix 3
Approved Courses and Institutions
Approved Courses and Institutions

Full-time undergraduate courses of not less than two-years in duration

Or

Part-time undergraduate courses of not less than one-year in duration (on a pilot basis).

Or

Postgraduate courses of not less than one-year in duration pursued in one of the following institutions:

- Dublin City University
- University College Cork
- University College Dublin
- National University of Ireland, Galway
- Maynooth University
- Trinity College Dublin
- University of Limerick
- Athlone Institute of Technology
- Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown
- Institute of Technology, Carlow
- Cork Institute of Technology
- Dublin Institute of Technology
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Institute of Art, Design and Technology
- Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology
- Limerick Institute of Technology
- Institute of Technology, Sligo
- Institute of Technology, Tallaght
- Institute of Technology, Tralee
- Waterford Institute of Technology
- Marino Institute of Education
National College of Art & Design
National College of Ireland
Mary Immaculate College
St. Angela’s College
Pontifical University of Maynooth
Carlow College (St. Patrick’s)
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
Kimmage Development Studies Centre
Montessori College, (A.M.I.) Milltown
St. Nicholas Montessori College
The Honorable Society of Kings Inns
The Law Society of Ireland, Blackhall Place
Appendix 4
SAMPLE Annual Expenditure Report 2018
**SAMPLE Annual Expenditure Report 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEI:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Person:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annual Summary of Expenditure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018 Allocation</th>
<th>€</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Expenditure of 2018 Allocation as at 31st December 2018</td>
<td>€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Carry over balance to be brought forward to 2019: (A-B)</td>
<td>€</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The undersigned, being the operational agency official responsible for the preparation of this return, hereby certifies:

a) that the figures contained in this return are accurate and complete
b) that the costs covered by this claim have already been incurred and amounts given in this return have actually been expended.

**Signature:**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Signature of VP Finance**

**Name:**

**Title:**
Appendix 5
Third Level Access (TLA)
Indicator data required for ESF reporting
### Common Output (CO) Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LABOUR MARKET STATUS</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO01 – unemployed, including long-term unemployed,</td>
<td>All of these indicators are potentially relevant to TLA participants. However, where a participant was enrolled in the HEI in the previous academic year, and has returned the following year, they should be recorded as being inactive, even if they were in employment in the intervening period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO02 – long-term unemployed,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO03 – inactive,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO04 – inactive, not in education and training, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO05 – employed, including self-employed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO06 – below 25 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO07 – above 54 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO08 – above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO09 – with primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO10 – with upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO11 – with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISADVANTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO15 – Migrants, participants with a foreign background and minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO16 – Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO17 – Other disadvantaged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Common Immediate Result (CR) Indicators

| CR01 | inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving |
| CR02 | participants in education/training upon leaving |
| CR03 | participants gaining a qualification upon leaving |
| CR04 | participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving |
| CR05 | disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/training, gaining a qualification, in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving |

All the Common Immediate Result Indicators are potentially of relevance to participants in this activity. As all the participants will have been recorded under at least one of the disadvantage indicators CO16 or CO17, CR05 is potentially relevant to all participants.

### Common Longer-Term Result Indicators

| CL01 | participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving |
| CL02 | participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving |
| CL03 | participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving |
| CL04 | disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving |

All the Common Longer-Term Result Indicators are potentially of relevance to participants in this activity.
Programme Specific Indicators

| PO31.1 | The number of disadvantaged or/and disabled persons assisted in accessing third level education (Student Assistance Fund and Fund for Students with Disabilities) |
| PO31.2 | The number of LTU disadvantaged or/and disabled persons assisted in accessing third level education (Student Assistance Fund and Fund for Students with Disabilities) |
| PR31.1 | The number of disadvantaged or/and disabled persons assisted in accessing that gained a third level education upon leaving |
| PR31.2 | The number of LTU disadvantaged or/and disabled persons assisted in accessing that gained a third level education upon leaving |

All participants

All participants who were recorded as long-term unemployed on their Commencement Date.

All participants who gained a qualification upon leaving, i.e. all participants who were recorded under CR03 above.

All participants who were recorded as long-term unemployed on their Commencement Date and who gained a qualification upon leaving, i.e. all participants who were recorded under both PO31.2 and PR31.1 above.
APPENDIX 6
Sample FSD Resources Allocation Return (RAR) Template
The application will be in the form of an *excel template* (referred to as the *FSD RAR*) which will list the students by name, date of birth, disability category etc. Most of the fields are mandatory, and all mandatory questions must be answered. If a record for a student is incomplete, the student will be considered ineligible for support under the Fund. Supporting documentation should not be submitted with the funding application but kept on file.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Academic year</td>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>You may select in the first entry only. There is no need to select this for all student entries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
<td>Please select your HEI from the dropdown menu.</td>
<td>You may select in the first entry only. There is no need to select this for all student entries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Student ID</td>
<td>Please type the students ID</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Please type students first name</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Second Name</td>
<td>Please type students second name</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Please select students gender from the drop-down menu.</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
<td>Please enter the student’s date of birth in the format dd/mm/yyyy. Do not use any other format.</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Labour Market Status</td>
<td>Please select one of the following options from the dropdown menu.</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Educational Attainment</td>
<td>Please select the highest level of educational attainment of the student prior to commencement in their present course of study.</td>
<td><strong>Options are:</strong> Primary or Lower secondary education only, Upper secondary education (leaving certificate or equivalent), Post-secondary (Further Education Qualification), Third level Education Qualification (level 5-8), Postgraduate Qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO.</td>
<td>QUESTION</td>
<td>ANSWER</td>
<td>STATUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Other minority backgrounds</td>
<td>If the student is a non-national but permanently resident in the state (see residency requirements) or from the Traveller or Roma communities, then please select from the following options from drop down menu</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>County or Dublin Postcode</td>
<td>Please select persons County or Dublin Postcode (of normal residence) from the drop-down menu</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Other EU Funding</td>
<td>Please check if the student is or has been a beneficiary of another EU measure in the 2015 year, e.g. EGF, YEI, SAF etc., tick yes. Leave blank if not. (Please note: this does not affect eligibility under the Fund).</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Type of Student (First-time or Continuing)</td>
<td>Please indicate if the student is a first-time or continuing student. If the student has previously been supported when studying in a different college or on a different course in your college, you should select Continuing student</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Field of Study (ISCEd)</td>
<td>Please select the Field of Study in which the student is studying. <strong>Options are:</strong> (1) Education, (2) Humanities and the Arts, (3) Social Sciences, Business &amp; Law, (4) Science, Mathematics &amp; Computing, (5) Engineering, Manufacturing &amp; Construction (6) Agriculture and Veterinary (7) Health and Welfare (8) Services.</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Type of course (by level of award)</td>
<td>Options are: Higher Certificate (Level 6), Ordinary level Degree (Level 7), Honours Degree (Level 8), Post-Graduate Course (H.Dip/Masters/PHD etc.).</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO.</td>
<td>QUESTION</td>
<td>ANSWER</td>
<td>STATUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Mode of Study</td>
<td>Options are:</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Please indicate the year of the students' course</td>
<td>Please select from the following options from drop down menu</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Primary Disability</td>
<td>Please select the student’s primary disability (i.e. the students major or overriding condition).</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Secondary Disability (if any)</td>
<td>If the student meets the criteria for more than one disability, and for which supports are requested, please select the student’s secondary disability.</td>
<td>Optional – please leave blank if not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Non-Medical Supports</td>
<td>Please select from the following options from drop down menu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Assistant</td>
<td>Only where applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enter the % of academic contact hours for the academic year for which personal assistance is required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Deaf/Hard of Hearing Supports</td>
<td>Please select from the following options from drop down menu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sign Language Interpreter</td>
<td>Only where applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Please select % of the week for which ISL will be required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SpeedText</td>
<td>Only where applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Please enter the number of hours per week for which Speed Text support will be required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Transport Costs</td>
<td>Please select from the following options from drop down menu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of kms per day student travels</td>
<td>Only where applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Please enter (numerical value only) the number of Kms for which transport costs are sought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO.</td>
<td>QUESTION</td>
<td>ANSWER</td>
<td>STATUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Learning Support</td>
<td>Please select from the following options from drop down menu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist Dyslexia Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist Mental Health Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist Autism Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other Specialist Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Support: 1:1 Tuition</td>
<td>Academic Support: 1:1 Tuition</td>
<td>Only where applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Assistive Technology</td>
<td>Please select from the following options from drop down menu</td>
<td>Only where applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student record Complete?</td>
<td>Yes or No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7
Useful Links
AHEAD
The Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) is an independent non-profit organisation working to promote full access to and participation in further and higher education for students with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation.
http://www.ahead.ie/

Student Finance
This website provides useful information on financial support for further and higher education.
http://www.studentfinance.ie/

DARE
The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places at reduced points to school leavers with disabilities.
http://www.accesscollege.ie/

Enable Ireland
Enable Ireland’s mission is to work in partnership with those who use our services to achieve maximum independence, choice and inclusion in their communities.
http://www.enableireland.ie/

National Council of the Blind of Ireland (NCBI)
NCBI, the national sight loss agency, is a not for profit charitable organisation which provides support and services nationwide to people experiencing sight loss.
http://www.ncbi.ie/

Deaf Hear
Deaf Hear provides a range of services to over 32,500 Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and their families annually. It also has a wider impact on the lives of all Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Ireland through advocacy and campaigning for improved health and education services, and for better access to society for all.
https://www.deafhear.ie/Deaf-Hear/home.html
Aspire
The Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland, aims is to support people with Asperger Syndrome (AS) to lead full and independent lives.
http://www.aspireireland.ie/

Dyslexia Association
The Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) aims to promote the understanding, treatment and prevention of the problems which can be associated with dyslexia, a specific learning disability.
http://www.dyslexia.ie/

The Irish Wheelchair Association
The Irish Wheelchair Association is a driving force for change, development and enhancements in the quality of life of people with disabilities in Ireland.
http://www.iwa.ie/

Irish Association of Supported Employment
IASE is a national voluntary organisation which was established in February 1994 with the aim of promoting and developing supported employment at a national level.
http://www.iase.ie/

Disability Federation of Ireland
Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation for voluntary disability organisations in Ireland who provide services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions.
http://www.disability-federation.ie/

Support for Erasmus Students and Staff with a Disability
The National Agency (The Higher Education Authority) makes available additional support to assist students and staff with the extra costs incurred by those who wish to undertake an Erasmus mobility. Students/Staff may be awarded ERASMUS support to help cover the travel and subsistence costs (including insurance and visa costs) incurred during their study period abroad.
http://eurireland.ie/i-am-a/erasmus-student/supplementary-support-for-students-with-disabilitiesspecial-needs/
European Students Union

The European Students’ Union (ESU) is the umbrella organisation of 47 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 39 countries (December 2012). The NUSes are open to all students in their respective country regardless of political persuasion, religion, ethnic or cultural origin, sexual orientation or social standing. The aim of ESU is to represent and promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at the European level towards all relevant bodies and the European Union, Bologna Follow Up Group, Council of Europe and UNESCO. ESU represents over 11 million students in Europe.

http://www.esu-online.org/

ESF Ireland

The European Social Fund is the European Union’s main financial instrument for helping people seeking employment through investment in education, skills and employment support.

http://www.esf.ie/