
Bury College Policy and Procedures

Bursary Policy 2023-2024

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1. Introduction

Bury College receives an allocation of funds from the Government to help support eligible learners with the costs of coming to college. Funding will be distributed to learners in accordance with relevant guidelines and legislation. See Appendix 1 for details.

Statutory funding includes:

- Free College Meals
- 16-19 Bursary (inc 19+ continuers and 19-24 with EHCP)
- Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary (formally known as Guaranteed Bursary)
- 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Funds (19+ DLSF)
- Advanced Learner Loan Bursary

Students may also be eligible to access external funding including:

- Care to Learn – Childcare support for students under 20
- FE ITE Bursary for those undertaking PGCE training

2. Eligibility

Funding is available to learners who are able to demonstrate that they meet the age, residency and eligible education criteria for each fund as stated in the guidelines (see Appendix 1) and live in a household with a low income which as a result will experience financial hardship through participating in education. These funds are intended to mitigate some of the hardships experienced.

The college wishes to minimise bureaucracy and collection or duplication of unnecessary information. However, in order to make sure support funds are used appropriately to those students eligible, the college will carry out further residency checks if a student has successfully enrolled at the college, and the college is drawing down ESFA or SFA funding for this learner.

Any allocation of funding is subject to successful assessment and enrolment onto an eligible course. All funding is subject to available funds and an application / eligibility does not guarantee support either in part or full. On-going funding is subject to full engagement in learning which includes good attendance, progress and positive behaviour.

For eligible students aged 16-18, aged 19 and continuing on the same course they started the previous year or aged 19-23 with an EHCP funding will be allocated to learners who are either in receipt of a Free College Meals eligible benefit or are able to demonstrate that their household income is less than £40,000 per annum.

Eligible learners aged 16-18 who are living independently and in receipt of Universal Credit or Income Support in their own name, live in care or are a Care Leaver may apply for the Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary.

For eligible learners aged 19+ either 19+ DLSF or Advanced Learner Loan Bursary funding will be allocated to learners who are able to demonstrate that their household income is less than £40,000 per annum.

In exceptional circumstances the college may, at their discretions be flexible with the income threshold and an allowance of £1,000 is made for each additional dependant under the age of 18 in the household.

Funding is limited and the college expects all learners to make full use of all other forms of funding available prior to making an application for support.

3. Administration of Applications and Funds

3.1 Administration costs

In line with guidance the college will allocate 5% of the total allocation towards administrative costs from 16-19 Bursary and Free Meals funding and for 19+ Discretionary Learner Support and Advanced Learner Loans Bursary 5% from the total utilised funds.

3.2 Application and Assessment

Applications for funding will be completed online via the Pay My Student Bursary Portal which can be accessed through direct link from the college website. In cases where this is not possible due to access or language issues, a paper form may be issued and uploaded to the portal after completion.

Applications will be assessed in order of date received and funds will be awarded upon receipt of a fully completed form, together with all relevant evidence (see Appendix 2 for details of appropriate evidence). Provided there are sufficient funds available, awards will be backdated to the start of learning (regular payments e.g. travel costs will be backdated based on overall attendance at the time of processing).

As per the bursary funding guidance notes, students will be contacted via their college email if they are required to provide further evidence or details to support their application. It is the student's responsibility to check their email regularly if they are awaiting the outcome of an application

It is the student and parent / guardian responsibility to ensure that they provide the relevant evidence and fully complete the application form. Assistance is available with completing the form on request.

3.3 Notification of Award

On receipt of a complete application along with all the required evidence, the college will normally advise students of the outcome via their college email within 10 working days however for applications received during the first term this may take up to 28 working days due to the high volume of applications received. In the event that a student does not meet the criteria for an award they will be notified in writing or by email stating the reason why.

All awards are subject to satisfactory enrolment on an eligible college course and ongoing commitment to learning.

Students who are unsuccessful in being made an award can appeal using the process in section 3.8

3.4 Method of payment

The majority of funding awards will be paid directly to the learner, normally by BACS. The learner must provide evidence that they have a bank account in their own name eg a copy of their bank card, bank statement or letter from the bank showing account name, sort code and account number to match against the details on the application form. Help will be provided with opening a bank account where this is necessary.

In exceptional circumstances where a student cannot manage their own affairs or is not allowed to receive cash payments due to status we will meet with the student to discuss alternative methods.

In the case of payments towards college trips / activities funds will automatically be transferred to the curriculum budget on behalf of the learner unless payment has already been made in full in which case a refund direct to the learner will be made.

3.5 Non-Payment

In the event that a student has a payment stopped due to poor attendance, behaviour or progress they will be informed of this via their college email in the week prior to the expected payment date. It is not expected that this should be a surprise as students should know whether their attendance, behaviour or progress is good or not. Tutors will also be informed via Pro Monitor if a payment is due to be stopped for their students.

The college accepts no responsibility for any consequences or costs incurred as a result of reduced, delayed or non-payment.

The college will use the following as guidance when making the decision to withhold or reduce payments:

3.6 Attendance, Behaviour and Progress

All students are expected to demonstrate good attendance, behaviour and progress in order to continue to receive financial support. The required standards are:

Attendance: Learners must maintain a minimum of 90% overall attendance across all classes including functional skills. Attendance will be checked every 2 weeks prior to the release of a payment. Students will receive a 'warning email' the first time attendance falls below this point after which continued improvement must be shown.

If a payment is stopped due to falling attendance the student must show an improvement on overall attendance % by the next attendance check in order to have future payments reinstated.

Behaviour and Progress: Course tutors may apply financial conditions where a student is failing to demonstrate an on-going commitment to learning. For example: "must complete all outstanding assignments prior to next bursary payment been released."

3.7 Appeal against a reduced payment or non-payment

Students who have had a payment reduced or withheld should in the first instance speak to their Group tutor to discuss their reasons for absence. If the tutor wishes for the student to be paid they should respond to the Pro Monitor notification on the students record relating to this payment.

3.8 Appeals

Appeals must in the first instance be addressed in writing to the Director of Personal Development. Appeals will only be upheld where it can be clearly demonstrated either a) the college has not followed its own policy or b) that the student is in a unique situation that the college has not considered previously and additional funding is required to ensure they can complete their course. Where appropriate the Director of Personal Development will meet with the learner to seek further information.

4. Data Protection and Fraud

All applications and associated paperwork will be stored in locked cabinets within the Student Services main office and on the Pay My Student Portal. Only the designated Student Services staff will have access to the paperwork and the application portal. According to guidance, the paperwork will be retained for a maximum of 6 years. The college is required by statute to share certain information with the Government.

The college will always co-operate with criminal investigations and may share information with appropriate authorities that may help with the prevention or detection of a crime.

Any apparently fraudulent applications will be referred to the appropriate authorities and may lead to suspension or exclusion.

5. Funding Awards

5.1 Free College Meals

Free College Meals are available to those aged 16-18 (including 19+ continuers and 19-24 with EHCP) where the learner or their parents are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the Guaranteed Element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (but not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190 as assessed by HMRC)
- Working tax credit run on
- Universal Credit with net earning not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per year (after tax and not including any benefits they get)

Eligible students will receive an allowance of £4.50 per day uploaded to their Student ID badge to be used at college catering outlets. An award for meals during the college holidays may also be made at the discretion of the college and subject to availability of 16-19 Bursary funds.

In conjunction with our catering providers the cost of providing a value for money, hot meal and a drink on site has been agreed at £4.50 per day. This will be provided onsite unless the student is completing a compulsory placement in which case the cost of the meal will be paid retrospectively on production of proof of attendance.

5.2 16-19 Bursary Funds (including 19+ continuers and 19-24 with EHCP) - ESFA Funded Learners only

16-19 Bursary Funds are awarded to support students with the costs of attending college on a day-to-day basis. Students or their parents must be in receipt of one of the Free School Meal eligible benefits or have an annual household income of less than £40,000 per annum.

Support must be identified under one of the relevant support need categories and agreed by the college as necessary to help students participate in education.

Depending on the support need identified payments may be made as a one-off or on a regular basis; directly to the students bank account or in another appropriate format e.g. bus ticket, voucher or direct payment to the curriculum for an activity

For those eligible students the College will provide support under the following categories –

Travel - For those eligible for the Our Pass (Greater Manchester Free Bus Pass) a refund of the £10.00 purchase fee will be issued as a one off payment. For those not eligible for the Our Pass a regular award will be made throughout the college year to cover the actual costs of transport to college e.g. bus or Metrolink ticket

In exceptional circumstances additional funds for travel may be awarded in addition to the Our Pass for example where travel by train or tram is more appropriate or where travel outside of GM is required e.g. for industry placement purposes

Meals - For those not eligible for Free College meals, an allowance of £4.50 per day will be uploaded to the Student ID badge to be used at college catering outlets.

Compulsory Trips – a minimum of 75% of the trip cost will be paid direct to the curriculum (unless the full cost has already been paid in which case a refund will be issued to the student).

Course Kit, Uniform and Compulsory Books – a minimum of 75% of the costs will be refunded directly to the student

Other College Costs e.g. stationary, additional print credits, internet access, clothing, and miscellaneous trips or expenses as required

Childcare Costs – support for students who start their course before their 20th birthday are eligible to apply to Care to Learn for support with childcare <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>. Top up funding may be available where necessary and appropriate.

5.3 Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary (formally known as Guaranteed Bursary) up to a maximum of £1200

This is specifically for learners who are considered vulnerable by the Government and fall into one of four categories:

- Child – Looked After (section 20 of the Children Act 1989 or Section 22 of the Children Act 1989)
- Care leaver (section 31 of the Children Act 1989)
- Receiving Universal Credits in own name and living independently or a young parent
- On ESA and receiving DLA or PIP in own name

The college claims this funding on a case by case basis from the Government and it does not form part of a block grant. Assessments will be made by considering the financial needs and other income sources available for the young person and funds will be awarded against the same categories as the Discretionary Funds.

Meal allowance will be paid from either the Free College Meals fund or Vulnerable Bursary depending on eligibility.

Students who receive a Vulnerable Bursary cannot also receive a discretionary bursary.

5.4 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Funds

Discretionary Learner Bursary Funds are awarded to support students with the costs of attending college on a day-to-day basis. Students must have an annual household income of less than £40,000 per annum.

Support must be identified under one of the relevant support need categories and agreed by the college as necessary to help students participate in education.

Depending on the support need identified, payments may be made as a one-off or on a regular basis; directly to the students bank account or in another appropriate format e.g. bus ticket, voucher or direct payment to the curriculum for an activity

For those eligible students the College will provide support under the following categories, paid directly to the student over the college year –

Travel expenses – Cost of relevant daily / weekly bus ticket or contribution towards petrol costs based on distance travelled.

Zone 1 those living 0-1 miles from college	no contribution
Zone 2 those living 1-5 miles from college	£2.50 per day
Zone 3 those living 5-10 miles from college	£5.00 per day
Zone 4 those living 10+ miles from college	£7.50 per day

Parking £2.00 per day

Meals – £4.50 per day for each day of timetabled lessons

Trips – a minimum of 75% of the trip cost will be paid direct to the curriculum (unless the full cost has already been paid in which case a refund will be issued to the student)

Course Kit, Uniform, memberships and Compulsory Books – a minimum of 75% of the costs will be refunded directly to the student

Other College costs e.g. stationary, internet access, clothing, books and miscellaneous trips or expenses as required

Childcare Funding – college will contribute 80% towards the cost of childcare required to enable the student to attend their course. Childcare must be with an Ofsted registered provider but can include nursery, childminders and wrap around care. Paper applications are available from Student Services for childcare funding.

5.5 Loans Bursary Fund - Level 3, 4, 5 and 6 FE learners with an Advanced Learner Loan aged 19 or over

Loans Bursary Funds are awarded to support students with the costs of attending college on a day-to-day basis. Students must have an annual household income of less than £40,000 per annum and have an approved Learner Loan for their current course.

Funds will be awarded under the same categories as the 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Funds.

Appendix 1

Further information on the funding sources is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-learner-loans-funding-rules-2023-to-2024>

<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/8149/gmca-aeb-funding-and-performance-management-rules-2023-2024-v1.pdf>

Other Funding

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-to-learn-guide-for-the-2023-to-2024-academic-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fe-funding-initial-teacher-education-ite-bursaries-2023-to-2024>

Appendix 2

Evidence to Support Applications for Financial Support

For **Free College Meals** - you only need to provide evidence for the relevant benefit eg Income Support (you do not need to provide full household income proof).

For **16-19 Bursary** – you need to **either** provide evidence that you are entitled to Free College Meals (as above) **or** provide proof of total household income with an annual income of less than £40,000. An allowance of £1,000 is made for every additional child under the age of 18 e.g. if you have 3 children under 18 including the student then your income threshold will need to be under £42,000 per annum.

For **Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary (16-18)** – you need to provide proof of **either** your LAC or Care Leaver Status from the Local Authority, proof that you are in receipt of ESA and DLA/PIP in your own name **or** proof that you are in receipt of Income Support / Universal Credit in your own name because you are living independently or because you are caring for a child. For those with UC/ IS further evidence will also be required to determine your independent status e.g. proof of tenancy, utility bill or child benefit letter.

For **Adult DLSF and Advanced Learner Loan Bursary** – you will need to provide proof of total household income with an annual income of less than £40,000. If you are under the age of 21 this will include any parental income as you are still classed as dependant, over the age of 21 this is only income in your own name.

An allowance of £1,000 is made for every additional child under the age of 18 e.g. if you have 3 children under 18 then your income threshold will need to be under £43,000 per annum.

Universal Credit

If you are providing evidence of Universal Credit we will require the statement from your most recent complete assessment period. If income from earnings fluctuates, we may require the full statements for your 3 most recent monthly payments in order to make an accurate assessment.

To download the full statements, you will need to:

- Log in to your Universal Credit Portal and go to the payments page, where you will see a list of all the payments you have received.
- Click onto your most recent payment and download or take screen shots of the full statement – including any deductions and the final total at the bottom.
- Repeat for the next 2 months payments It is essential that the whole statement is provided in order for us to use it as evidence.

Income Support, Carers Allowance, Pension Credit and State Pension

We require letters dated within 3 months, of the date you submit your bursary form, that show you are in receipt of the benefit and how much you are receiving per week/fortnight/month. If your letter is older than 3 months then you can provide additional proof of payment eg. A recent bank statement to show that you are still in receipt of payment.

Job Seekers Allowance/Employment Support Allowance

We require letters dated within 3 months, of the date you submit your bursary form, that show you are in receipt of the benefit and how much you are receiving per week/fortnight/month. The letter must show the type of JSA / ESA you are receiving e.g. Income Related or Income Based. If your letter is older than 3 months then you can provide additional proof of payment e.g. A recent bank statement to show that you are still in receipt of payment.

Evidence of Employment/Self Employment

This can be submitted in the form of 3 months of payslips or a P60 if you are employed.

If you are self-employed we need to see your tax return for April 2023. If you receive tax credits or Universal Credit and your employment is shown on this document, there is no need to provide further evidence.

Please note that you may be asked for further evidence of household income, in the form of 3 months bank statements if you only produce payslips/P60 or a tax return in order to verify that there is no other income.

Child and Working Tax Credits

We require the full Tax Credit Award Notice for 2023 - 2024. In some cases we can accept the renewal notice if it includes your payments for 2022/23.

If your tax credit award notice includes your income (employed or self-employed) this is the only evidence of your employment we require. If it does not include your employment, you will need to provide further evidence.

NASS benefits

If you are in receipt of NASS we will need to see your Aspen card or evidence of this support.