

**16-19 BURSARY FUND
FRAMEWORK &
PROCEDURES
2024/25**

16-19 Bursary Fund Framework & Procedures 2024/25

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ELT SIGN-OFF: Marie Haworth, Vice Principal Teaching, Learning & Learner Support 

16-19 Bursary Fund 2024/25 Framework & Procedures

16-19 Bursary Fund Purpose

'The 16-19 Bursary Fund exists to promote equality of opportunity in education to all learners irrespective of culture, gender or disability. The fund aims to promote access into and retention in education by financially supporting learners to overcome personal, social and evidenced economic barriers to retention and achievement in order to encourage educational aspirations and personal development.'

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This framework and procedures document is written in accordance with the 16–19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2024/25, as published by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in May 2024. It gives details of the arrangements for the payment of the Bursary for defined vulnerable groups and also the 16-19 Bursary Fund (Discretionary Bursary).

1. Introduction

The purpose of the 16-19 Bursary Fund is to provide financial support to young people who face the greatest barriers to continuing in education or training post-16, and have a genuine, evidenced need.

The Government aims to eliminate the gap in attainment between those young people from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, and to ensure every young person participates in, and benefits from, a place in 16-19 education and training.

The College will ensure that all applications for the 16-19 Bursary Fund are considered on the same basis irrespective of age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, belief or faith.

Young people should exercise their eligibility to other forms of financial support before they pursue an application to the 16–19 Bursary Fund, for example, Care to Learn (for young parents up to and including 19 years of age) and Residential Support Scheme for those learners accessing education that is not available within reasonable travelling distance of their home.

2. Learner eligibility: all bursaries

2.1 Age

- Young people must be aged 16 and under 19 years on 31 August 2024. Where a young person turns 19 during the academic year they can continue to receive support until the end of the year/programme of study.
- Students aged 19 or over are eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme began aged 16–18 (19+ continuers) OR have an education, health and care plan (16 to 24 years).

2.2 Eligible education provision

- Young people must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (ie Ofsted), and funded by the ESFA directly or via a local authority.
- Otherwise publicly funded and leading to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the ESFA list of approved qualifications
- Non-employed students aged 16-19 who are participating in a Prince's Trust Team Programme are eligible to receive bursary funding

2.3 Residency

- Students must meet the residency criteria in the ESFA funding regulations for post 16 provision.
- Accompanied Asylum seekers aged up to and including age 18 with an adult relative or partner are entitled to education, but not to public funds. As long as they have not

had their asylum claim refused they can be supported by the fund with books, equipment or a bus pass.

- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and as such are eligible for the Bursary for defined vulnerable groups if they have a financial need.

2.4 Ineligible learners

- Those who do not fulfil the UK/EEA residency requirement (3 years residence for non-educational purposes)
- Those on non ESFA courses
- Those on Higher Education courses, waged apprentices or provision with learning aims wholly funded from other sources

3. Eligibility criteria

3.1 Bursary for defined vulnerable groups

The following defined groups reflect that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial support from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to participate in education.

The defined vulnerable groups are:

- In care on a voluntary basis or under a Care Order (including UASC) – this category includes those placed with a local authority foster carer, but not those who are privately fostered or adopted
- Care leavers, including those aged 18 or above who were previously looked after for 13 weeks or more after the age of 14 and ending after the age of 16. This category also includes those who meet the care leaver criteria and have been transferred to a Special Guardianship Order.
- In receipt of Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves, or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner.
- In receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right, as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

The bursary can pay up to £1,200 per year for a student on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more. This support is based on financial need, and will be pro-rated if a student is on a shorter programme, studying less than 16 hours a week, or withdraws from their study programme early. If it is deemed that a student's financial needs are being met, their application could be refused on that basis, even though they were eligible as one of the defined vulnerable groups.

In exceptional circumstances awards of more than £1,200 can be made where it is deemed that an individual needs extra help to remain in education. Any such payments will be made from the Discretionary fund and auditable evidence kept.

3.2 16-18 Bursary for defined vulnerable groups

	All	To be deducted from VB
Bus pass cost (termly)	100%	Yes*
Essential equipment only	100%	Yes*
Luncheon Vouchers	£4.50 per day	No
Weekly payment based on 90% attendance.	£18 per week for Drinks, Breakfast, paper, pens, bag, data etc	Yes*

*Over £1200 - additional costs come from 16-18 Discretionary fund

3.3 Discretionary Bursary

Eligibility for the Discretionary bursary is based on household income and actual financial need. Payment of the Discretionary fund is to help eligible students with costs such as travel, essential books, equipment or specialist clothing, which they would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate.

Any award from the Discretionary Fund will depend upon the gross household income **and/or** being in one of the following priority categories:

- Carers (own child or other person)
- Young person who is homeless or living independently of family (not in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit)
- Teenage parents in receipt of Care to Learn funding (not in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit)
- Large families with 3 or more children
- Living with extended families ie grandparents

3.4 Qualifying Household income (Discretionary fund only)

Families where parents/guardians are in receipt of Universal Credit, Child Tax Credit and/or Working Tax Credit, Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Guaranteed Pension Credit, Paid employment, Self employed, Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 - with a household income of under £28,000 (see tables below for full details).

3.5 16-18 Discretionary Bursary Fund

Band	Band A Income Up to £16,190	Band B Income £16,191 to £24,999	Band C Income £25,000 to £28,000
Bus pass travel	100%	100%	25% BACS
BACS travel – learner’s car/motorbike	100%	100%	25%
Car travel with parents	100%	50%	25%
Free meals - FCM or LV	£4.50 per day	No	No

3.6 16-18 learners – Income Threshold

Universal Credit income should be calculated by deducting the UC Housing if not paid to the landlord and for large families using the table below.

Household income	Banding
Up to £16,190	A – LV or FCM
£16,191 - £24,999	B
£25,000 - £28,000	C

3.7 16- 18 Ready Reckoner – Large Families

UC income should be calculated by deducting the UC Housing

Based on household size	Band B	LV entitlement
1 adult + 3- 4 children	Up to £26,700	3 children - £15,600 4 children - £19,100
1 adult + 5-6 children	Up to £35,700	5 children - £22,500 6 children - £26,000
2 adults + 3-4 children	Up to £33,600	3 children - £18,300 4 children - £21,800
2 adults + 5-6 children	Up to £42,600	5 children - £25,200 6 children - £28,700

4. Supporting Evidence requirements

For those young people eligible to receive the Bursary for defined vulnerable groups, the required evidence of their status is as follows:

- **Young people in care** – Written confirmation of their current looked-after status from the Local Authority which looks after them
- **Care Leavers** – Written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the Local Authority which looks after them or provides their Leaving Care services
- **In receipt of UC or IS** – A copy of their UC or IS claim/award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the learner’s name/confirm they are entitled to the benefit in their own right. Learners must also provide documents such as a tenancy agreement in their name, a child benefit receipt, children’s birth certificates, utility bills and so on
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right - for students receiving UC/ESA and DLA or PIP, a copy of their UC claim from DWP and evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP

In order to qualify for the Discretionary fund the required evidence is as follows:

Household Income	Evidence Required
Universal Credit	<i>Screenshots from your Universal Credit online account showing your name and address and a breakdown of the payment awarded including any deductions.</i> <i>If you are not in employment, the last month must be provided. If you are employed the last 3 months payments awarded must be provided.</i>
Child Tax Credit and/ or Working Tax Credit	<i>Most recent Tax Credits Award letter 2024/25 or 2023/24</i>
Jobseekers Allowance	<i>Most recent award letter 2024/25 or 2023/24 OR One month's bank statement less than 3 months old</i>
Employment Support Allowance	
Income Support	
Guaranteed Pension Credit	
Paid Employment	<i>Latest payslips (2 if paid monthly and 4 if paid weekly)</i>
Self Employed	<i>Latest accounts from your accountant OR Self- Assessment Tax Return</i>
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	<i>Evidence of a valid enrolment</i>

For learners aged 16–18, evidence is required from each parent/guardian residing in the same house.

5. Categories of Assistance (general principles)

If a young person withdraws from their programme of study early, all future payments from either fund will cease with immediate effect.

The main priority will be to assist eligible learners with the initial costs of coming to College. Any ongoing support will be subject to conditions of attendance, behaviour and available funds.

Most awards from the funds will be in the form of a bus pass or lunch entitlement loaded on to an ID cards. Any direct payments required will be made into a learner's bank account where possible.

Learners will be encouraged and supported to open bank accounts. In very exceptional circumstances when this is not possible authorisation may be given to have payments made into another authorised person's bank account.

5.1 Bursary for defined vulnerable groups

Students eligible for the Bursary will receive a termly bus pass and any essential books or equipment, which are not already provided. They will also be entitled to a meal voucher to the

value of £4.50 per day. In addition they will receive a weekly payment of £18.00 paid directly to their own bank account, over a 40 week period. This payment is subject to 90% attendance each week. Authorised absences will be taken into consideration such as reported sickness and essential appointments. Any disciplinary sanctions will be taken into account. The weekly payment is to cover items such as additional drinks, breakfast, stationery and data.

5.2 Travel Costs

- The College provides bus services across 7 designated routes. There are 5 types of bus pass available dependent on location ie Citirider/Preston Bus, Central Lancs, Goldrider and Transdev for East Lancs.
- If a learner loses their bus pass, a replacement is available at a cost of £25. Only one replacement pass is allowed per academic year.
- Where a learner does not use the bus service and therefore does not require a bus pass, the Welfare team will consider awarding a travel grant equivalent to the amount paid to 19+ learners.
- Where a learner does not live on any of the designated bus routes, and incurs disproportionately high travel costs, can be paid at the 'very long' rate applicable for 19+ learners.
- Where a learner is travelling with parents and eligible for Band B, a 50% contribution will be made to the Travel Other allowance.

6. Free College Meals and Lunch Vouchers

6.1 Free College Meals (FCM)

Learners who apply for a 16-19 Bursary will automatically be assessed against the eligibility criteria to receive either FCM or lunch vouchers (LV). Separate online applications are therefore not required.

Students who already received free meals on or after 1st April 2018 will continue to be eligible for free meals up until March 2025, and then until the end of their phase of education. Evidence of entitlement may be required such as a copy of a previous entitlement letter or an email from the learner's high school confirming receipt of free school meals.

Eligibility for FCM will be assessed based on you or your parent/s or carer/s providing evidence of receipt of certain state benefits specified below, or if you can provide evidence of entitlement to free school meals in Year 11 at your previous school.

To be eligible for FCM, you or your parent/s must be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of the State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax credit) and have annual gross income of no more than **£16,190**, as assessed by HMRC.
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit **Working Tax Credit is not a qualifying benefit for Free College Meals**

- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per annum (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

6.2 Lunch vouchers (LV)

Lunch vouchers are awarded to learners whose household income is no more than **£16,190**, but do not receive any of the qualifying benefits for FCM. In the main these are families receiving Working Tax Credit or UC. LV are also awarded to the following vulnerable learners if they are not entitled to FCM:

- Young people who are homeless or living independently of family (not in receipt of IS or UC)
- Teenage parents in receipt of Care to Learn funding (not in receipt of IS or UC)
- Learners with exceptional circumstances (as authorised by a Welfare Officer)

Exceptional circumstances are where:

- the learners attendance may be affected
- their physical, mental or emotional health is in jeopardy
- their achievement/retention is at risk

The value of a Free College Meal for 2024/25 will be £4.50 per day and a meal deal is available from the food outlets on site for this price. You may also receive an allowance if you are off site, attending a work placement or on work experience.

If you are eligible your entitlement will be loaded on to your College ID which can be used at all the food outlets on the College site. If you wish to buy a meal that exceeds the £4.50 value you can pay the extra amount by cash or card.

7. Appeals

Any learner who is unhappy with their award, or is experiencing a temporary change of adverse circumstances, is able to make an appeal. All appeals are discussed at a weekly meeting of the Welfare team; however the final decision will be made at the discretion of the Student Services Manager.

Appeals will be measured against the following criteria:

- The learner needs extra funds because their attendance is affected
- Their physical, mental or emotional health is in jeopardy.
- Their achievement or retention is at risk

The amount of funds awarded will depend upon:

- The financial needs of the learner (particularly where there is potential or actual hardship or homelessness).
- The amount of funds remaining to be allocated.