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# FE Bursary Procedure 2023-2024

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## 1. Scope

The procedures below cover the following bursary funds that are administered by the College:

- 16 - 19 Bursary Fund:
  - a) Vulnerable Bursary
  - b) Discretionary Bursary
- Free Meal Fund
- Loan Bursary Fund for students who have an approved Advanced Learner Loan
- Discretionary Learner Support Fund (for 19 plus students)
- Care to Learn

## 2. 16 – 19 Bursary Fund

### a) Vulnerable Bursary

#### Financial eligibility:

To be eligible for the 16-19 Bursary Fund students must meet the financial eligibility criteria and:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2023 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2023 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2023 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- meet the residency criteria in ESFA or West of England Combined Authority (WECA) 2023 to 2024 academic year funding regulations for post-16 provision
- be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted). The provision must also be either:
  - funded directly by ESFA or West of England Combined Authority (WECA)
  - or otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including Level 3) accredited by Ofqual or pursuant to Section 96 or the Learning and Skills Act 2000
  - a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

To be eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary, students must also be in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:

- In Care
- Care Leaver
- Receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit 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
- receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right **as well as** Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

### **Evidence:**

- Letter from a Social Worker or relevant council confirming In Care or Care Leaver
- Award letter or Benefit Office stamped application form confirming in receipt of the eligible benefits listed above
- Online Universal Credit statement

### **Support provided:**

The bursary for vulnerable groups can pay up to £1,200 per year to a student participating on study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more if they need that amount of support. Students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks should be paid a pro-rata amount.

## **b) Discretionary Bursary**

To be eligible for the Discretionary Bursary, students must also be in one of the defined vulnerable groups:

- Parent / Guardian in receipt a means tested benefit (listed below)
- Parent / Guardian with gross household income must be below £27,500 (based on the previous tax year's income unless there has been a change in circumstances)

### **Evidence:**

- P60
- Full copy (totalling 6 pages) of the household's Tax Credit Award notice for 2023/24
- Evidence of income e.g. audited accounts for self-employed people
- Award letter, or Benefit Office stamped application form, confirming being in receipt of one of the following benefits:
  - Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
  - Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
  - Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
  - Income Support (IS)
  - Universal Credit (can be online statement)

### **Support provided:**

- Travel for journeys over 3 miles each way (verified by Google maps walking man)
- Course related costs determined by a course tutor

### **Additional Information:**

- Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are employed, rather than in education. They are not eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.
- Non-employed students aged 16 to 19 who are participating in a Prince's Trust Team Programme are eligible to receive the bursary in the same way as any other student participating in an eligible, publicly funded course.
- ESFA does not expect students on distance learning provision to need help from the bursary fund because they do not have the kinds of costs the bursary is intended to cover (travel, equipment and uniforms, for example). In the rare instances where an institution identifies such a student does require financial help, they should provide support in-kind. An example could be providing a temporary travel pass for the student to attend exams.

### 3. Free Meal Fund

#### Financial eligibility:

Students must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2023, or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and be in receipt of, or have parents 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 State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per annum

#### Evidence:

Award letter, or Benefit Office stamped application form, confirming being in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Income Support (IS)
- Universal Credit

#### Support provided:

For each substantially timetabled day £3.00 is provided via cashless vending for use in the College canteens.

### 4. Loan Bursary Fund

#### Financial eligibility:

Students must have taken out an Advanced Learner Loan to be eligible and meet the following criteria:

- Gross income less than £21,000 if living independently, or gross household income less than £32,000
- In receipt of a means tested benefit (listed below)

#### Evidence:

- P60
- Full copy (totalling 6 pages) of the household's Tax Credit Award notice for 2023/24
- Evidence of income e.g. audited accounts for self-employed people
- Award letter, or Benefit Office stamped application form, confirming being in receipt of one of the following benefits:
  - Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
  - Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
  - Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
  - Income Support (IS)
  - Universal Credit

#### Support provided:

- Travel for journeys over 3 miles each way (verified by Google maps walking man)
- Course related costs determined by a course tutor

- Childcare – see arrangements and evidence below
- Support towards living costs

## 5. Discretionary Learner Support Fund (for 19 plus students)

### Financial eligibility:

To be eligible for support students must be:

- 19 or over
- Studying for a qualification funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- Meet the ESFA or West of England Combined Authority (WECA) residency criteria of home student

To be eligible for the Discretionary Learner Support Fund, students must also be in one of the defined vulnerable groups:

- Gross income less than £21,000 if living independently, or gross household income less than £32,000.
- In receipt of a means tested benefit (listed below)

### Evidence:

- P60
- Full copy (totalling 6 pages) of the household's Tax Credit Award notice for 2023/24
- Evidence of income e.g. audited accounts for self-employed people
- Award letter, or Benefit Office stamped application form, confirming being in receipt of one of the following benefits:
  - Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
  - Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
  - Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
  - Income Support (IS)
  - Universal Credit

### Support provided:

- Travel for journeys over 3 miles each way (verified by Google maps walking man)
- Course related costs determined by your course tutor
- Childcare - see arrangements and evidence below

## 6. Arrangements for awards for all bursary funds

### Childcare

#### ***Evidence required:***

- Childcare provider Ofsted Number
- Childcare provider fees for the required hours
- Child / children copy of birth certificate
- Confirmation of government free childcare hours. These hours must be used where possible to cover student timetable at college. We can support any top up hours if required.

#### ***How is the award made?***

- Paid in arrears based on previous month's attendance
- BACS payment made directly to the childcare provider

- Awards are made to cover the timetabled hours plus reasonable travel time of up to 1 hour

### ***Student responsibilities***

- Students are expected to have 85% attendance and awards will not be made if attendance falls below this. The childcare provider will be notified.

## **Travel**

### ***How is the award made?***

- Bus travel is awarded through a bus pass or daily tickets for timetabled days
- Petrol awards are made at 30p per mile
- Train awards are dependent on individual circumstances.

## **Appeals**

Information on how to appeal is provided in the Bursary Policy and will also be outlined in the award letter.

## **7. Care to Learn**

Care to learn (C2L) helps young parents under the age of 20 to continue in, and return to education after the birth of a child. It does this by providing funding for childcare whilst the young parent is studying. The scheme can provide up to a maximum total amount of support of £160 per child per week.

The young parent's study programme must have some direct public funding.

C2L will only fund childcare provision registered with Ofsted.

Young parents, their education institution and their childcare provider must all meet the eligibility criteria to receive C2L.

Young parents must complete and submit a new C2L application for each academic year. Childcare providers and education institutions also need to provide information for each young parent who applies. Students submit applications online via the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) online portal.

## **Appendix A (further definitions)**

### **Accompanied asylum seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)**

Generally, asylum seekers are not entitled to public funds. Accompanied asylum seeking children (those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. If they are destitute they can apply to the Home Office for suitable housing and cash for essentials, but they are not eligible for other income.

As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application for asylum refused, institutions can provide in-kind student support such as books, equipment or a travel pass. Under no circumstances should an institution give cash to any asylum seeker unless they are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC).

### **Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children**

Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children do not receive cash support from the Home Office and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups ('in care' group), where they have a financial need.

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, institutions must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour, the local authority must provide them with the same support and services as they do care leavers. As such, they continue to be eligible for a bursary as a student from a vulnerable group until they reach the upper age limit.

Where an asylum claim is not supported, the individual may not be able to stay legally in the UK. When asylum claims have been fully heard/the appeals process exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds (with a few exceptions where the withdrawal of support would be seen as a breach of human rights).

### **Defining in care and care leavers**

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines 'in care' as 'Children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.'

A 'care leaver' is defined as:

- a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or
- a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

### **Foster care, including privately arranged foster care**

A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as looked after. They meet the criteria for the 'in care' vulnerable group where they need financial support to participate.

A child who is privately fostered (in other words, a private arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child) is not classed as a looked after child and is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

In some instances, a young person may have been in the care of the local authority and the care transferred to another party via a permanent form of fostering such as a Special Guardianship Order. In these circumstances, the

young person is defined as having left care so is now a care leaver. They must meet the definition of a 'care leaver' in full (so, the period of weeks and age range set out above). If they do, they are eligible for help from the bursary for vulnerable groups, where they need financial support to participate.

### **Information regarding Universal Credit**

Universal Credit (UC) is being rolled out across the country and will gradually replace Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance as well as other benefits. Institutions will increasingly see students claiming bursaries for defined vulnerable groups based on receiving UC.

UC award notifications do not include any information on the benefits they replace. For this reason, the description of the bursaries for vulnerable group category that relates to receipt of UC or Income Support is that a student must be receiving UC in their own right because they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner.

Bursary funds awarded to a student should not form part of the UC assessment undertaken by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). How DWP treat any funding for education depends on whether the student is undertaking advanced full time education. It is unlikely that 16 to 18 year olds will be in advanced full time education as they are generally on study programmes at level 3 or below.

The costs of books, uniforms and equipment costs are usually charged direct by the curriculum area and the items are purchased on behalf of the student. The costs available are defined for each course to meet the needs of that course.

Eligible students are able to request support with the costs for University visits and interviews.

Awards are made subject to satisfactory attendance of a minimum of 90%, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If attendance is less than 90% awards may be stopped and may be reinstated if attendance improves.