



Student Bursary Fund Policy

Audience	External
Requirement	Extra
Policy Owner	DoSE
1st Delegation	SLT
Last Delegation	SLT
Review Cycle	Every 2 years
Last Review	June 22
Due for Review	June 24

Bursary Fund Policy Fareham College

Policy Encompasses: 16-19 Bursary Fund

Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund

19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund

1. Introduction

16-19 Bursary Fund

This Fund is for student financial assistance fund and is comprised of two elements; the Bursary Fund for Vulnerable Young People and the Discretionary Bursary Fund. It is provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). This policy has been designed with the purpose of enabling those from less affluent backgrounds to access their chosen course of study so that financial hardship does not become a barrier to their learning.

The Bursary Fund consists of two elements; Vulnerable Bursaries of up to £1,200 a year designed to assist nominated vulnerable groups outlined by the ESFA, with additional costs involved with accessing Further Education and Discretionary Bursaries issued on a variable basis dependent on an assessment of household income and of what is deemed necessary for students to access their chosen course. Both elements of the Fund are intended to assist students facing financial hardship to help with the cost of equipment, travel and essential course trips and various other course related expenditure; the Funds may be used for a wide variety of purposes to meet individual needs.

Advanced Learner Loan Bursary (ALLBF) and 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF)

The Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) and Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund (ALLBF) for 19+ students are financial assistance funds comprising of post 19 discretionary and post 20 childcare funds provided by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The fund is intended to be used for students facing financial hardship to help with essential course related costs such as equipment, travel, trips, professional body membership fees and the cost of childcare while studying (for students aged 20 and over). Funds may be used for a wide variety of purposes to meet individual needs. This policy has been designed with the purpose of enabling those from less affluent backgrounds to access their chosen course of study so that financial hardship does not become a barrier to their learning.

For all Funds applications for support are considered individually to ensure that those in need receive help. Due to the nature of an individual's circumstances, consideration for assistance will be given according to need and Discretionary awards will be granted based on the information provided. Funds will only be granted where a genuine need for assistance has been demonstrated and not all applications are successful. Discretionary awards will be granted based on the information provided at application and in the main on production of evidence of household income. For the purposes of these funds it is deemed that households with an income below £25,000 per annum are those most in need and will receive assistance. It is however recognised that production of income evidence is not always possible and that there may be instances when funding is issued without production of that evidence, if for example it would mean that a student could not continue attending their course or if an emergency arose. It is also recognised that the Funds (with the exception of the Vulnerable Bursary Fund) are cash limited and as such not all applications to the Funds are necessarily successful – the College will only continue to allocate and issue funding for as long as the budget allows.

2. Eligibility for Bursary Funding

To be eligible to receive any Bursary students must:

- Be enrolled on an eligible course funded by either the ESFA or via a Local Authority. Bursaries will not be paid to students who are not enrolled, or where an enrolment is pending
- Meet the residency and other eligibility criteria as set out in the *ESFA Funding Rules*
- Be aged 16 or over and under 19 on 31st August for the 16-18 Bursary Fund
- Be aged 19 or over on 31st August for DLSF/ALLBF or aged 20 or over on 31st August for DLSF/ALLBF for Childcare
- Students applying to the ALLBF must have been assessed and found to be eligible for an Advanced Learning Loan.

The College reserves the right to make awards to students who appear to be outside the financial criteria, based on individual and exceptional circumstances however, to qualify for funding they **must not be**:

- studying through Work Based Learning
- studying a Higher Education course
- studying a full-cost (i.e. non SFA-funded)
- on day release from prison
- eligible for funding from the Care to Learn scheme if applying for assistance with childcare costs

Further to this list, students must also meet the following eligibility criteria depending on the type of Bursary they will access:

(i) Bursaries for Vulnerable Young People

Students must be in one of the following categories of vulnerable groups and provide documentary evidence of such:

- Those in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit.
- Those in Care or registered as a Care Leavers.
- Those who have a disability and are in receipt of Employment & Support Allowance **and** Disability living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments.

(ii) Discretionary Bursaries

- In most cases, students should be able to demonstrate financial hardship. Evidence of income and/or status is required. Students who can provide evidence that their household income falls below the threshold set by the College will be deemed as having demonstrated financial hardship. In some cases, where the provision of such evidence is impossible the College may accept other means to demonstrate financial hardship such as a letter from parent/support worker or self-declaration and bank statement. Such cases will be dealt with and assessed on an individual basis
- Students can access funding for what are deemed essential course related costs
- The College reserves the right to make awards to students who appear to be outside the financial criteria, based on individual and exceptional circumstances.

3. Assessment of Applications

Applications must be made on the appropriate Bursary Application form. The College aims to ensure that the funds available to support students are distributed wisely and fairly, allocated according to individuals' own circumstances and the costs associated with their chosen course, used to widen access to and participation in Further Education and used to support priority groups as defined by the ESFA and as appropriate to the local area.

Assessment of Applications for Bursaries for Vulnerable Young People:

Students must provide evidence of their circumstances to confirm that they are in the vulnerable groups as defined in point 2 (i). Acceptable forms of evidence are:

- For those in Care or registered as a Care Leavers: Written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked-after status from the Local Authority which looks after them or provides their Care Leaving services.
- For those in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit: A letter setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled or a recent bank statement showing receipt of benefit or a screenshot of proof of receipt Universal Credit in the student's own name
- For those who are disabled and are in receipt of Employment & Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments: A letter setting out each of the benefits to which the young person is entitled

Assessment of Discretionary Bursaries

- Students will be assessed on annual net household income taking into account the student's partner or parent/guardians as appropriate. Awards will not normally be made where a student's household income is above £25,000pa unless significant financial hardship can be evidenced.
- Where a student lives with a partner, the income of both the student and the student's partner will be used.
- Students in receipt of or dependent on somebody in receipt of income-assessed benefits will be awarded the highest level of funding.
- Where a student's household income changes during the academic year, the student may apply to be reassessed based on the new household income
- Where a student is aged 19 or over and lives with their parent(s), each case will be assessed individually to decide whether or not they are financially independent. The College will usually require written confirmation from a parent/guardian that the student is deemed financially independent and is in receipt of their own income

In the main applications require evidence of income to be provided. Evidence may include:

- Most recent Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN) – all pages. The figure used for assessment will be the earned income figure included for the previous tax year
- Screen shot of Universal Credit Statement including any earned income
- Photocopies of latest 4 (weekly) or 2 (monthly) pay slips
- A letter from current employer as proof of wage
- P60 issued by current employer
- Photocopies of benefit award letters or bank statements no more than 6 months old
- Details of accounts for self-employment.

If it is the case that the provision of such evidence is impossible the College may accept other means to demonstrate financial hardship such as a letter from parent/support worker or self-declaration and bank statement. Such cases will be dealt with and assessed on an individual basis and awards will be allocated at the discretion of the College.

4. Allocation and Payment of Bursaries

The allocation of funds will be prioritised based on the following criteria:

- **Bursaries for Vulnerable Young People**

Students who have provided evidence that they are eligible to receive this Bursary will be paid the sum of £1,200 over one academic year in accordance with ESFA guidance. Students will be paid by BACS transfer every two weeks depending on satisfactory attendance and behaviour. At the beginning of the academic year students must sign an agreement to confirm that they are aware of College attendance and behaviour requirements. Students who withdraw early from courses will cease to be paid.

- **Discretionary Bursaries**

For any assistance to be offered that requires a student contribution, the student contribution should be paid first and the College will then allocate the financial assistance based on the criteria as shown in the table below:

Income	Discretionary Bursary Contribution	Student Contribution
Below £25,000 pa	80% of essential course & travel costs	20% of essential course & travel costs
Below £25,000 pa and can demonstrate significant hardship	Up to 100% of essential course and travel costs	Optional course costs
£25,001 or more pa	No funding available	100% of course and travel costs

i. Materials and equipment including protective clothing for trades courses

Assistance with costs of equipment, materials or protective clothing is given for items considered essential for the course. Where PPE is required for a course a set amount will be allocated to the student to enable them to purchase one set of appropriate uniform or boots/overalls etc. When appropriate, payment will be made direct to the student on production of receipt of goods that they have purchased, in some cases payment will be made in advance to enable the student to order their equipment. In this case students will need to show proof that they are ordering equipment. Where the student is eligible for the Bursary for Vulnerable Young People 100% of the costs may be met.

ii. Text books

The College is usually unable to fund any purchases of individual text books for students but is able to offer the loan of a text book through the Learning Resource Centre. Any individual requiring a book that is not currently stocked within the LRC should contact the LRC Manager to request that text book is

purchased. Students may access the College's virtual learning environment which holds links to a number of useful resources (including the library catalogue system) and a wealth of course specific information and resource which is updated regularly by course tutors.

iii. Visits fees

If the budget allows then assistance is given for visits that students are required to participate in in order for them to achieve their qualification. Students and their families must be informed of all essential costs prior to enrolment to enable them to pay any fees and for the curriculum department to make appropriate plans to subsidise trip costs. Optional and overseas trips will not be funded through Bursaries. Payments will be made directly to the appropriate department via internal transfer. Where the student is eligible for the Bursary for Vulnerable Young People 100% of the costs may be met.

iv. Travel assistance for public transport

Travel assistance will be provided for students if they have been assessed as eligible for funding and live a certain distance away for the College. The College will assist with either the purchase of a bus pass or reimbursement of a percentage of rail fares, whichever is most cost effective, up to a maximum of £600. Assistance with petrol costs cannot be provided unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated (e.g. no other means of transport available). Payments will be made directly to the appropriate bus company for bus passes and directly to the student for rail costs on production of train tickets. Where the student is eligible for the Bursary for Vulnerable Young People 100% of the costs of bus travel may be met.

v. Registration/Examination/Tuition fees

All students that are aged 16 to 18 will automatically be entitled to examination and registration fees for their first sitting of any examinations that they are registered for. Students who require funding for resits for examinations will not generally be allocated funding for this purpose, although applications may be considered if an exceptional case of hardship can be proven. New students who are 19+ cannot apply to this fund for assistance towards course fees. If students are not entitled to fee remission through any of the criteria listed in the Fee Remission section of the Fareham College FE Fees Policy, then they will need to pay all tuition and exam/registration fees in full or for eligible courses apply for an Advanced Learner Loan to cover fees. In exceptional cases where students are progressing from one full time course to another and the payment of fees prohibits them from doing so they may then apply to the fund for assistance. Awards will only be made at the discretion of the SMT and applications must be supported by the appropriate Faculty Director.

vi. Childcare funding for Learners aged 20+

Students and childcare providers must be prepared to abide by the following criteria in order to receive funding. The Student Support Co-ordinator will provide details of the criteria in writing to childcare providers and students before any payments are made:

- Students are entitled to use any registered childcare provision but must provide evidence that the provider is registered with Ofsted. The childcare provider must also be prepared to abide by the payment protocols set by the College and will be made aware of these before entering into an agreement with the student
- Funding allocated is for one academic year only – if funding is required in future years then students will need to reapply to the Discretionary Learner Support Fund/Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund.

- The College will provide funding for sessions when the student is timetabled to be in College, including mandatory placement hours and also allows for reasonable travelling time to and from their chosen childcare provider.
- The College will only provide funding for childcare during term time. If providers charge for care during holiday periods then these periods must be charged directly to the student.
- If the student ceases to attend their College course then funding of childcare will be withdrawn. Any fees incurred for notice periods will be charged directly to the student.
- Childcare costs can only be paid in arrears and on production of an invoice addressed to the College Finance Office.
- It is the student's responsibility to secure a suitable and appropriate childcare placement. Any agreement concerning childcare for a student's child/children is made directly between the childcare provider and the student. The College does not accept any responsibility for the quality of childcare provided or for any dispute that may arise regarding this.

vii. Exceptional Hardship

The College may provide assistance to students who are facing exceptional unexpected hardship if it means that they would otherwise be unable to continue attending College or to complete their course to the best of their ability. Assistance may take the form of an agreed weekly payment to assist with emergency accommodation costs or a lump sum to enable a student to purchase equipment or to attend a College trip. When a student is faced with such circumstances it is recognised that it may not always be possible to provide evidence e.g. if suddenly estranged from parents/bereaved etc. The College will have discretion to make Bursary awards to students facing exceptional hardship as and when it is deemed necessary and budgets allowing.

5. Attendance conditions

If attendance falls below the College target any on-going funding may be withheld. This will be determined on a discretionary basis and students' individual circumstances will always be considered. The Student Support Coordinator will decide in conjunction with the Course Tutor whether the funding should be withheld based on progress, attitude, and reason for absence. Tutors can request reinstatement in writing or by email to the Student Support Coordinator. All personal circumstances will be taken into account when determining satisfactory attendance.

6. Students who withdraw

Any student who withdraws from College may be asked to return any items purchased or repay any financial assistance in full.

7. False or fraudulent applications

Where students are found to have intentionally given misleading or inaccurate information the College will claim back the award made. Providing false statements may result in students being sanctioned in accordance with the College Disciplinary Policy and/or prosecution.

8. Right of Appeal

In the event that the student disagrees with the financial assessment made by the Student Support Coordinator **or** if the student has been assessed as not eligible for support and deems that they will be unable to access their course without funding then they should appeal in writing by letter or email to the appropriate Faculty Director who will review the assessment and respond accordingly.

Please note that if a student is eligible for financial assistance, this does not guarantee that funding will be provided (unless students are eligible for the Bursary for Vulnerable Young People element). Due to high levels of demand for funding, all allocations are based on priority need. Allocations will be made on this basis until all monies have been spent.