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Policy Statement:

Learner Support Funding 2026/27

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Approved by:	Senior Leadership Tem				
Relevant to (please ☒):	☒ Bede	☒ Innersummit	☒ NETA	☒ RCC	☒ SRC
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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Learner Support funding policy is to provide a clear set of guidelines to learners, their parent/carers, staff, and other workers within the college community, together with wider stakeholders. The College will discharge learner support funds in line with the relevant funding guidance set out by the Department for Education (DfE) and Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) to ensure it meets the needs of students, local and regional priorities.

The Education Training Collective (Etc.) receives allocations of funds from the DfE and TVCA to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation. Institutions must ensure the funds are allocated to learners who demonstrate a genuine need. Different funding streams have different eligibility criteria, which are set out below.

Etc. is committed to supporting students who are experiencing financial disadvantage and as such barriers to that prevent them from accessing education. This policy and the accompanying procedure will outline available bursary support i.e., processes for applying, eligibility as well as evidence requirements and how the funds will be allocated.

Etc. is a group organisation that comprises of Stockton Riverside College, Redcar & Cleveland College, NETA Training Trust, Bede Sixth Form College, and Inner Summit. The term 'College,' where used within this document and appendices, is a generic term that encompasses all organisations within the Etc. College group.

The College reserves the right to amend / cease support detailed in this policy due to changes in the funding rules or changes or requirements from the DfE) and/or TVCA/Y&NYCA/NECA or local and national developments.

SCOPE

All learners can apply on the following links:

ETC bursary link:

<https://the-etc.itineris.live/>

Site specific bursary links:

[NETA Training- Bursary](#)

[Stockton Riverside College- Bursary](#)

[Bede Sixth Form- Bursary](#)

[Redcar & Cleveland College- Bursary](#)

Bursary applications are assessed according to the eligibility criteria for the relevant funding stream. The policy clearly defines the eligibility criteria for each bursary type to ensure the College meets the requirements of the funding guidance. There are six available bursaries which are as following:

- 16-19 Bursary Funding
- 16-19 Free College Meals
- Vulnerable Bursary Funding
- 19+ Adult Education Budget Learner Support Funding
- Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Funding
- Care to Learn

STATEMENT OF INTENT:

Learning Support Funding (LSF) is intended to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation to ensure they are able achieve the best possible outcomes. LSF helps eligible students with essential costs of participating in education that are required as part of their study programme.

To ensure financial hardship is not a barrier for students that are accessing college courses and to ensure retention and achievement, the College will promote these funds and other sources of financial assistance to help students who are in financial hardship.

Students who meet the eligibility criteria for support are not automatically guaranteed funding, as available resources are limited and may be fully allocated before all applications are processed.

Awards are only given when financial need is demonstrated. In light of this, the College asks students to consider any financial commitments they take on prior to any entitlement being awarded from the student bursary department.

The College ensures that the criteria for financial support complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and does not directly or indirectly discriminate against students on the basis of any protected characteristic.

Key sources of Information and Guidance

16 to 19 Financial Support

[16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

[Free meals in further education funded institutions guide: academic year 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

[Care to Learn academic year 2026 to 2027: conditions of grant funding - GOV.UK](#)

19+ Financial Support Learner Support

[Adult education and skills funding allocation technical guidance: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

Childcare Support 20 or Over

[Help paying for childcare: Help with childcare while you study - GOV.UK](#)

Advanced Learner Loans Course Fees

[Advanced Learner Loan: How to apply - GOV.UK](#)

Advanced Learner Loans – Bursary Fund

[Advanced learner loans funding and performance management rules: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

[Advanced Learner Loan: Bursary fund - GOV.UK](#)

Note – The government guidance can change within the academic year, and the College reserves the right to amend / cease support detailed in this policy. This can be due to changes in the funding rules or requirements from the funding bodies.

LOCATION AND ACCESS

The DfE guidelines state that this Policy and Procedure is available on the Gateway and accessible through the College websites.

In accordance with DfE guidelines, this Policy and Procedure is available on the Gateway and can be accessed via the College website."



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Procedure:

Learner Support Funding 2026/27

Introduction

Applications are assessed on a first-come first-served basis, and all applications are to be submitted online. Financial support applications are accepted throughout the academic year. The Student Bursary Team will conduct individual assessments and reviews at specific points throughout the academic year to ensure that support is allocated appropriately based on individual need and available funding. It is acknowledged that in some cases a student's circumstances may change, which could have implications for their participation in, or continuation of, their course. This means that funding is only available to students for the period that they remain enrolled and actively participating on their study programme.

The Learner Support Fund (LSF) is a discretionary fund, and financial support is not an automatic entitlement. Submission of an application does not guarantee an award of financial support. Each application will be assessed individually, considering the student's circumstances, financial need, eligibility, supporting evidence and the availability of funds. The College reserves the right to determine the type and level of support awarded.

Students must provide evidence of their household income as part of their bursary application to ensure they receive the correct Learning Support Fund (LSF) allocation. The Student Bursary Team will review this evidence when assessing applications, which is a statutory requirement in line with Department for Education (DfE) funding guidance and audit requirements.

To ensure applications are assessed promptly and efficiently, it is essential that all required evidence is uploaded to the Student Bursary Portal at the time of application by the student, parent, or carer. Applications will be considered incomplete until all supporting evidence has been received and verified, which may result in delays to financial support through the Learner Support Fund (LSF). Applications are assessed in the order they are received once all required evidence has been submitted, and all applications must be submitted online.

Ongoing Eligibility for the Bursary

To remain eligible for the bursary, students must adhere to all College policies and procedures, including the Student Code of Conduct.

Students in receipt of financial support are expected to maintain satisfactory attendance, engagement and conduct throughout the academic year.

Attendance and engagement may be reviewed periodically throughout the academic year. This allows the Student Bursary Team to confirm students' ongoing eligibility for bursary support.

Where attendance, engagement or conduct gives cause for concern, the College reserves the right to review, reduce, suspend, or withdraw financial support. Individual circumstances, including authorised absences and additional support needs, will be considered as part of any review.

Students are responsible for informing the Student Bursary Team of any changes in their personal, financial or study circumstances that may affect their eligibility for support.

Payments to Learners

Wherever possible, students will receive support in kind rather than as a cash payment. In circumstances where this is not possible, payments will be made through electronic transfer directly into a student's nominated bank account.

If a student nominates a third party's bank account to receive the payment, it remains the sole responsibility of the student to ensure access to those funds. This will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The College accepts no responsibility for any disputes regarding access to funds paid into a nominated third-party account.

Where reimbursement of costs is available, students may be required to provide receipts, tickets or other supporting evidence before payment can be approved. Payments will only be made once the required evidence has been received and verified.

All payments to students will be made on published payment dates, which will be communicated through the Student Bursary Portal and/or award notification. Payment dates may be amended where necessary due to operational requirements, bank holidays, or exceptional circumstances.

The College will not normally make retrospective payments for periods prior to the date a completed bursary application is received. Requests for backdated support may be considered in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Student Bursary Team, where there is evidence that the student was eligible and a valid reason for the delay can be demonstrated.

Students should submit reimbursement claims and supporting evidence within the academic year in which the costs were incurred.

Audit/Governance

Administration and allocation of funds will be subject to the College's normal governance, financial regulations, and audit requirements. Audit guidance and funding regulations can be located on the Department for Education (DfE) website.

The College will maintain appropriate records and supporting documentation as required by the DfE for audit, monitoring, and compliance purposes. These records may be held electronically and will be retained in accordance with the College's data retention policies and relevant legislation.

Examples of evidence that may be retained include:

- Copies of income evidence used to assess eligibility and entitlement
- Letters confirming a student's vulnerable status
- Invoices received from childcare providers for childcare costs
- Evidence of travel costs and reimbursement claims
- Attendance, engagement, and payment records
- Correspondence relating to bursary assessments, reviews, and appeals

Appeals Process

Students will be formally notified of the outcome of their application through the Student Bursary Portal and/or in writing. In cases where the application is unsuccessful, the notification will include the reasons for the decision.

Students who are dissatisfied with a decision may submit an appeal. To initiate the process, the student must contact the Student Experience and Wellbeing Manager via email at studentfinance@the-etc.ac.uk within 10 working days of receiving the decision. The appeal should clearly state the reasons for the appeal and include any additional supporting evidence.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the application and supporting evidence will be reviewed by the Student Experience and Wellbeing Manager and an appropriate member of the Student Bursary Team who was not involved in the original decision, where possible.

The student will normally be notified of the outcome of the appeal within 10 working days of the review being completed.

If the original decision is upheld, the student may escalate the appeal to the Director of Experience and Wellbeing. The decision of the Director following the final review is final.

Support Available Through the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Types of Support

The 16–19 Bursary Fund offers discretionary, needs-assessed financial support to assist students in overcoming financial barriers to participation, helping them to access, remain in and successfully complete their education.

Support will only be considered for costs that a student would otherwise be required to pay to participate in their study programme. Support will be assessed based on individual need, eligibility, supporting evidence and the availability of funds.

Support may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Travel
- Books, learning materials or equipment
- Uniform and specialist clothing required for their study programme
- Support for higher Education Progression Activities
- Educational visits
- Meals
- Childcare
- DBS checks where required for the study programme
- Industry placement costs
- Other essential study programme-related costs that a student would otherwise be required to pay in order to participate in their education

Support Available with Household Income Thresholds

The Learner Support Fund (LSF) provides discretionary, needs-assessed support to eligible students who may face financial barriers to participating in education. The level and type of support available is determined by a student's assessed financial need, household income, individual circumstances and the availability of funds.

Support may be provided towards essential study programme-related costs that a student would otherwise be required to pay to participate in their education. Where possible, support will be provided directly by the College, through reimbursement of approved costs, or by payment to a supplier, rather than as a cash payment to the student.

The table below provides a guide to the types of support that may be available through the Learner Support Fund based on assessed household income.

	£0.00 - £16,190	£16,191 - £29,999	£30,000-£69,999	£70,000+
Bus Passes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Travel Allowance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Essential Course Uniform	Yes	Yes	No	No
Essential Course Related Kit and Equipment	Yes	Yes	No	No
Meals	Yes	Subject to available funding	No	No
Educational Trips	Yes	Yes	No	No
UCAS Application, University Interviews and Visits	Yes	Yes	No	No
Industry Placement Costs	Yes	Yes	No	No

Important Information

Support is not guaranteed and will be assessed based on individual need, eligibility, supporting evidence and the availability of funds. The support outlined in this table is intended as a guide. The College recognises that individual circumstances may vary and may consider applications outside of these thresholds where exceptional circumstances or financial hardship can be demonstrated. Students may be asked to provide additional evidence to support their application.

Free College Meals

£2.61 per day of the allowance is funded by Free Meals in Education. When you submit your application, the College will automatically assess your eligibility for Free College Meals. Students who meet the eligibility criteria for Free College Meals (FCM) will receive meal support in line with current government funding rates.

For the 2026/27 academic year, the College intends to supplement the Free College Meals allocation through the 16–19 Bursary Fund to provide eligible students with meal support equivalent to up to £3.50

per eligible day. This additional support is funded through the College's discretionary 16–19 Bursary allocation and is intended to be provided to eligible students regardless of whether they qualify for other forms of discretionary bursary support. The additional support remains subject to the availability of funds.

The value of any additional meal support will be reviewed periodically and may be amended in line with available funding and student need.

Eligibility

To be eligible for support through the 16–19 Bursary Fund, students must meet one of the following criteria:

- Aged 14 or 15 on 31 August 2026 and be electively home educated
- Aged 16 to 18 on 31 August 2026
- Aged 19 or over and continuing on a study programme that began when they were aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers)
- Aged 19 to 24 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Satisfy the residency criteria set out in the relevant DfE funding guidance and regulations

Eligibility for the bursary does not guarantee an award of support. All applications are subject to an assessment of individual need, supporting evidence and the availability of funds.

Appointments for assistance with completing the application can be made by emailing studentfinance@the-etc.ac.uk

Evidence

The following are examples of appropriate evidence that will be requested on application:

- Letter from the Benefits Agency or Job Centre Plus setting out benefit entitlement (letter should be less than three months old)
- Most recent Universal Credit statements covering a three-month period, ensuring that the full name and date can be seen, and showing the full statement including details of entitlement, deductions and total payment
- P60 from previous tax year
- Self-assessment tax calculation or certified accounts from previous tax year
- Tax Credit Award Notice for the current tax year (showing the household income used in the assessment)

Bank statements will not be accepted as evidence. Students are unable to self-certify their receipt of benefits or salary from employment and must provide evidence.

Copies of all documentary evidence will be retained on the Student Bursary Portal for audit, monitoring and compliance purposes.

In exceptional circumstances, where the required financial evidence is unavailable, a panel consisting of the Student Experience and Wellbeing Manager and a member of the Student Bursary Team may consider an application based on the student's individual circumstances. Supporting information may

also be provided by a Curriculum Manager or a member of the Safeguarding and Welfare Team where financial hardship is impacting a student's participation in education.

Travel to College

The College provides bus travel to and from college on weekdays during term time, subject to availability. Travel support may be available through the Learner Support Fund (LSF) for eligible students.

All students wishing to use transport provided by the College must complete a bursary application and submit household income evidence to have this assessed for eligibility via the bursary fund. Only one pass per student will be issued. A completed LSF application must be approved before a bus pass will be issued.

Students who are not approved for bursary support and wish to access a College bus pass will be required to commit to the transport arrangement for the full academic year and pay the applicable charge before the pass is issued.

Students will only be eligible for Arriva travel where their route is not serviced by a Stagecoach or other contracted College transport service. It is the student's responsibility to keep their pass throughout the year. If cards are lost or misplaced the students must apply to the student bursary team for a replacement which will include a fee of £15.00.

If there is not an appropriate bus service near home, students can use another public transport service. Students must have prior consent from the student bursary team before incurring any costs under this arrangement. The College may reimburse some of the cost, based on the following criteria:

- Students must complete the relevant travel questionnaire through the Student Bursary Portal.
- Supporting evidence, including travel tickets, rail receipts or fuel receipts where applicable, must be uploaded to the Student Bursary Portal.
- Rail travel may be funded up to £5 per day with supporting evidence. Mileage may be reimbursed at up to 25p per mile with supporting evidence of fuel costs.
- Students are encouraged to make use of any available travel discounts, including railcards where eligible.
- The cheapest travel option must be used.

Childcare

Students aged under 20 at the start of their course may be eligible for childcare support through the Care to Learn scheme.

Care to Learn is a government-funded scheme that helps eligible young parents with childcare costs whilst they continue in education.

Eligibility and support arrangements are determined by the current Care to Learn guidance. Further information is available on the Government website.

Students Undertaking Mandatory Industry Placements

Students who satisfy the eligibility criteria set out within this policy and are undertaking a mandatory industry placement may be considered for additional financial support where costs associated with the placement present a barrier to participation.

Support will be assessed based on individual need, supporting evidence and the availability of funds.

Students should notify the Student Bursary Team if they wish to be considered for support with industry placement costs.

Higher Education Progression Activities

Students intending to progress to higher education in the following academic year may be eligible for support with UCAS application fees and travel costs associated with attending up to three university open days or interviews, to a maximum combined value of £150.

Students enrolled on Performing Arts courses may be considered for additional support of up to £200 to cover costs related to auditions and associated travel. This support recognises the specific requirements of Performing Arts education, where in-person auditions are often a mandatory part of the application process for higher education or professional development.

Support for Students Through the Free College Meal Bursary Fund **Eligibility**

Students may be eligible for Free College Meals if they:

- **Are** aged 14 or 15 and electively home educated, or aged 16 to 18 on 31 August 2026
- Are aged 19 or over and continuing a programme that began when they were aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers)
- Are aged 19 to 24 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Students must also meet the eligibility criteria set out in the current Department for Education Free College Meals guidance.

Evidence Requirements

The College will assess eligibility for Free College Meals as part of the bursary application process.

Evidence may be requested to confirm entitlement and may include evidence of receipt of qualifying benefits in line with current government guidance.

Bank statements will not be accepted as evidence. Students are unable to self-certify their receipt of benefits and must provide supporting evidence where requested.

Copies of all documentary evidence will be retained on the Student Bursary Portal for audit, monitoring and compliance purposes.

Support for Students through the Vulnerable Bursary Fund

(Students in Care, Care Leavers and Defined Vulnerable Groups)

The Vulnerable Bursary Fund provides support to help students overcome financial barriers to participation and remain in education. Support is based on an assessment of actual financial need and is not an automatic entitlement. Awards may vary according to individual circumstances and the support required to participate in education.

Types of Support

- Students will be assessed on their actual financial need and the level of support required.
- Support may include, but is not limited to, travel, meals, essential course-related equipment and other costs necessary for participation in education. Where possible, support will be provided in kind rather than as a cash payment.
- The maximum bursary available is up to £1,200 per academic year (pro-rated for courses lasting less than 30 weeks), subject to an assessment of need.

Eligibility

- Be aged 16 to 18 and have a financial need.
- Be enrolled on a DfE-funded study programme and fall within ONE of the following categories:
 - o In care (including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children)
 - o Care leaver
 - o In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and someone dependent on them who lives with them, such as a child or partner
 - o Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right

Students aged 19 or over who are continuing a study programme started before their 19th birthday, and students aged 19 to 24 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), may be considered for support through the discretionary bursary fund, subject to the relevant eligibility criteria.

Evidence

- For students who are in care or care leavers, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority.
- For students in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit, a copy of the benefit award notice in the student's name.
- For students receiving ESA/UC and DLA/PIP, evidence of receipt of the relevant benefits must be provided.

Bank statements will not be accepted as evidence. Students are unable to self-certify their receipt of benefits and must provide supporting evidence.

Copies of all documentary evidence will be retained on the Student Bursary Portal for audit, monitoring, and compliance purposes.

Support for Students Through the DfE Adult Skills Fund

Types of Support

The DfE Adult Skills Fund provides discretionary, needs-assessed financial support to help students overcome financial barriers to participation and remain in education.

Support will only be considered for costs that a student would otherwise be required to pay in order to participate in their study programme. Support will be assessed based on individual need, eligibility, supporting evidence and the availability of funds.

Support may include but is not limited to:

- Travel
- Books, learning materials or equipment.
- Uniform and specialist clothing required for the study programme.
- University visits, interviews, and open days
- Educational Visits
- Meals
- Childcare
- DBS checks where required for the study programme.
- Industry placement costs
- Audition fees
- Other essential study programme-related costs that a student would otherwise be required to pay in order to participate in education.

Consideration may also be given to requests for additional support where a financial barrier to learning can be demonstrated.

Eligibility

- Be aged 19 or over on 31st August 2026 and not be eligible for any awards from the 16-19 Bursary fund.
- Satisfy the residency criteria set out in the DfE funding guidance for 2026/27.
- Be studying at a learning provider that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. OFSTED)
- Be enrolled on a publicly funded programme delivered by the College and funded through the Adult Skills Fund or other eligible funding stream.

Evidence

- Most recent Income Support information
- Most recent income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Most recent income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed 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)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit

- Most recent Universal Credit statements with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per annum.

In extreme circumstances when the requested evidence is unavailable, a panel consisting of the Student Support and Wellbeing manager and a member of the bursary team may consider an application based on individual circumstances. Supporting information may also be provided by a curriculum manager or a member of the safeguarding and welfare team where financial hardship is impacting on a student's participation in education.

Bank statements **will not** be accepted as evidence. Students are unable to self-certify their receipt of benefits or salary from employment and must provide supporting evidence.

Copies of all documentary evidence will be retained on the bursary portal for audit, monitoring, and compliance purposes.

Travel to College

The DfE Adult Skills Fund provides bus travel to and from college on weekdays during term time, subject to availability. This applies to students who meet the required household income threshold as set out in the funding guidance. All students wishing to use transport provided by the College must have a completed and approved bursary application in place before travel support can be awarded. Only one pass per student will be issued.

Students will only be eligible for Arriva bus travel if their route is not serviced by a Stagecoach bus. It is the student's responsibility to keep this pass throughout the year. If cards are lost or misplaced the students must pay for a fee of £15 for replacement pass.

If there is not an Arriva, Stagecoach service available students may use another public transport service. Students must have prior consent from the student bursary team before incurring any costs under this arrangement. The College may reimburse some of the cost, based on the following criteria:

- Students must complete the relevant travel questionnaire through the Student Bursary Portal. Supporting evidence including travel tickets or fuel receipts where applicable must be uploaded to the bursary portal.
- Rail tickets may be funded up to £5 per day with supporting evidence.
- Mileage may be reimbursed at up to 25p per mile with supporting evidence of fuel costs.
- The cheapest travel option must be used.

Childcare

- Students aged 20 years and above, on or before 31st August 2026, may be eligible for support with childcare costs up to £60 per day.
- The College recognises that some eligible learners receive government funded childcare provision. Any funded childcare entitlement will be taken into consideration when assessing childcare support through the bursary fund.
- The childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted and complete the required childcare documentation before the support can commence.
- The childcare agreement is between the student and the childcare provider and not with the College.

- Students remain responsible for childcare fees that have not been agreed by the Student Bursary Team

Students will be required to provide evidence of parental responsibility for the child or children they are claiming childcare support for, we will need to see evidence of receipt of Child Benefit and the child's full birth certificate.

Support with Course Equipment / Uniform

The LSF allows students to apply for financial support with purchasing course related materials that are required to complete their programme of study.

Meals Allowance

- Students over 19 years' old who meet the income threshold and are in receipt of an eligible benefit, or who are financially dependent on a parent or guardian may be entitled to meals while attending the college.

Students undertaking Mandatory Industry Placements

Students who satisfy the eligibility criteria as set out in this policy and are undertaking mandatory industry placements may be considered for additional financial support where costs associated with the placement present a barrier to participation.

Support will be assessed based on individual need, supporting evidence and the availability of funds.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the funding team if they wish to be considered for this funding support.

Support Available with Household Income Thresholds

The DfE Adult Skills Fund allows students to apply for financial support with purchasing course related materials that are required to complete their programme of study.

	£0.00 - £16,190	£16,191 - £29,999	£30,000-£35,000
Bus Passes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Travel Allowance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Essential Course Uniform	Yes	Yes	Yes

Essential Course Related Kit and Equipment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Discretionary meals	Yes	Subject to available funding	No
Educational Trips	Yes	Yes	Yes
UCAS Application, University Interviews and Visits	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry Placement Costs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Childcare	Yes	Yes	Yes

Important Information

Support is not guaranteed and will be assessed based on individual need, eligibility, supporting evidence and the availability of funds. The support outlined in this table is intended as a guide. The College recognises that individual circumstances may vary and may consider applications outside of these thresholds where exceptional circumstances or financial hardship can be demonstrated. Students may be asked to provide additional evidence to support their application.

Support for Students Through the Adult Learner Loan Bursary Fund

Students who have been approved for the Advanced Learner Loans through the Student Loans Company may be eligible for support with essential study related costs, including course equipment, uniform, travel meals, and childcare.

Support is discretionary and will be assessed based on individual need, eligibility, supporting evidence and the availability of funds.

For these students it is essential that their Advanced Learner Loan has been approved and is in place before support can be considered through the Adult Learner Loan Bursary Fund.

If your application is successful and you are in receipt of any state benefits, it is your responsibility to inform the Department for Work and Pensions about any learner support you receive from us, as the learner support payment may affect your eligibility for some state benefits.

Conditions

Applications will be accepted until the end of the academic year 2026/27 or until funds have been fully allocated, whichever is sooner. However, submission of an application for this support does not guarantee financial support. All applications will be assessed based on individual need, eligibility, supporting evidence and the availability of funds.

Where an Advanced Learner Loan application is not approved, or where the student fails to provide the information required by the Student Loans Company within a reasonable timescale, any associated bursary application may be withdrawn or deemed unsuccessful.

Any costs incurred prior to loan approval including childcare fees course equipment uniform, or any other study programme related costs will remain the responsibility of the student.

Types of Support May Include But is not Limited to

- Travel
- Books or Equipment
- Uniform and specialist clothing required for their study programme.
- University visits, interviews, and open days
- Educational Visits
- Meals
- Childcare
- DBS
- Industry placement
- Auditions

Eligibility

- Be aged 19 or over on 31st August 2026
- Be studying an eligible Level 3 to 6 Further Education (FE) course and have an approved Advanced Learner Loan from the Student Loans Company.
- Satisfy the residency criteria set out in the current Advanced Learner Loan funding guidance.

- Have completed a bursary application and provided all required supporting evidence.
- Demonstrate a financial need that presents a barrier to participation in education.

Evidence

- Most recent income Support information
- Most recent income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Most recent income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed 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 HM Revenue and Customs)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Most recent Universal Credit statements with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per annum.
-

In exceptional circumstances, where the required financial evidence is unavailable, a panel consisting of the Student Experience and Wellbeing Manager and a member of the Student Bursary Team may consider an application based on the student's individual circumstances. Supporting information may also be provided by a Curriculum Manager or a member of the Safeguarding and Welfare Team where financial hardship is impacting a student's participation in education.

Bank statements **will not** be accepted as evidence. Students are unable to self-certify their receipt of benefits or salary from employment and must provide evidence.

Copies of all documentary evidence will be retained on the student bursary portal for audit, monitoring, and compliance purposes.

Childcare

- Students aged 20 years and above, on or before 31st August 2026, may be eligible for support with childcare costs up to £60 per day.
- The college recognises that some eligible learners can receive government funded childcare provision. Any funded childcare entitlement will be taken into consideration when assessing childcare support through the bursary fund.
- The childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted and complete the required childcare documentation before support can commence.
- The childcare agreement is between the student the childcare provider and not with the College.
- Students remain responsible for childcare fees that have not been agreed by the Student Bursary Team.

Students will be required to provide evidence of parental responsibility for the child or children they are claiming childcare support for, we will need to see evidence of receipt of Child Benefit and the child's full birth certificate.

Support with Course Equipment / Uniform

The LSF allows students to apply for financial support with purchasing course related materials that are required to complete their programme of study.

Meals Allowance

- Students over 19 years' old who meet the income threshold and are in receipt of an eligible benefit, or who are financially dependent on a parent or guardian may be entitled to meals while attending the college.

Students undertaking Mandatory Industry Placements

Students who satisfy the eligibility criteria as set out in this policy and are undertaking a mandatory industry placement may be considered for additional financial support where costs associated with the placement present a barrier to participation.

Support will be assessed based on individual need, supporting evidence and the availability of funds.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the funding team if they want to be considered for this funding support.

Travel to College

The Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund provides bus travel to and from college on weekdays during term time, subject to availability. provided at the time of application to the College. This applies to students who meet the required household income threshold as set out in the funding guidance. Only one pass per student will be issued.

Students will only be eligible for Arriva bus travel if their route is not serviced by a Stagecoach bus. It is the student's responsibility to keep this pass throughout the year. If cards are lost or misplaced the students must pay the replacement fee of £15 for a new pass.

If there is not a Stagecoach, Arriva, or dedicated bus route near their home, they may use another public transport service. Students must have prior consent from the Student Bursary Team before incurring any costs under this arrangement. The college may reimburse some of the cost, based on the following criteria:

- Students must complete the relevant travel questionnaire through the Student Bursary Portal. Supporting evidence, including travel tickets, rail receipts, or fuel receipts where applicable, must be uploaded to the Student Bursary Portal.
- Rail tickets may be refunded up to £5 per day with supporting evidence.
- Mileage may be reimbursed up to 25p per mile with supporting evidence of fuel costs.
- Students are encouraged to make use of any available travel discounts, including railcards where eligible.
- The cheapest travel option must be used.

Household Income

In order to be eligible for support through the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund, students must provide full and complete evidence of their household income. Details of acceptable evidence can be found within the bursary application process and on the student bursary portal.

Applications will be considered incomplete until all required evidence has been received. Delays in providing evidence may result in support awarded through the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund.

Where the required evidence is not provided within a reasonable time, an application may be deemed as unsuccessful, and any costs incurred prior to approval will remain the responsibility of the student. from a childcare provider or for essential course materials or uniform will be your sole responsibility.

Support Available with Household Income Thresholds

The Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund provides discretionary, needs-assessed support to eligible students who may face financial barriers to participating in education. The level and type of support available is determined by a student's assessed financial need, household income, individual circumstances, and the availability of funds.

Support may be provided towards essential study programme-related costs that a student would otherwise be required to pay in order to participate in their education. Where possible, support will be provided directly by the College, through reimbursement of approved costs, or by payment to a supplier, rather than as a cash payment to the student.

	£0.00 - £16,190	£16,191 - £29,999	£30,00-£35,000
Bus Passes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Travel Allowance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Essential Course Uniform	Yes	Yes	Yes
Essential Course Related Kit and Equipment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Discretionary Meals	Yes	Subject to available funding	No
Educational Trips	Yes	Yes	Yes
UCAS Application, University	Yes	Yes	Yes

Interviews and Visits			
Industry Placement Costs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Childcare	Yes	Yes	Yes

Important Information

Support is not guaranteed and will be assessed based on individual need, eligibility, supporting evidence and the availability of funds.

The support outlined in this table is intended as a guide. The College recognises that individual circumstances may vary and may consider applications outside of these thresholds where exceptional circumstances or financial hardship can be demonstrated.

Students may be asked to provide additional evidence to support their application.