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Policy Statement:

Learner Support Funding 2025/26

Date approved:	October 2025	Review Date:	September 2026		
Approved by:	Finance, Capital and Resources Committee				
Relevant to (please ☒):	☒ Bede	☒ Innersummit	☒ NETA	☒ RCC	☒ SRC
Signed (Lead Manager):	Director of Student Experience and Wellbeing				
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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 or local and national developments.

SCOPE

All learners can apply on the following links:

ETC bursary link:

<https://apply.the-etc.ac.uk/bursary/>

Site specific bursary links:

<https://apply.stockton.ac.uk/bursary/>

<https://apply.cleveland.ac.uk/bursary/>

<https://apply.bede.ac.uk/bursary/>

<https://apply.neta.co.uk/bursary/>

<https://apply.skillsacademybillingham.ac.uk/bursary/>

Link to provide further evidence:

<https://apply.the-etc.ac.uk/bursary/evidence>

Link to edit any support required throughout the year:

<https://apply.the-etc.ac.uk/bursary/edit/>

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 five 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

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: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

[Free meals in further education funding guidance 2024 to 2025 \(Updated December 2024\)](#)

[Care to Learn academic year 2025 to 2026: 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 with childcare while you study
Learner Support](#)

Advanced Learner Loans Course Fees

[Advanced Learner Loan](#)

[How to apply](#)

Advanced Learner Loans – Bursary Fund

[Advanced learner loans funding and performance management rules: 2025 to 2026 - 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 2025/26

Introduction:

Financial support applications are taken throughout the academic year. The student bursary team will conduct individual assessments and reviews at specific points throughout the academic year which ensures accurate allocation of funds. It is acknowledged that in some cases a student's circumstances can alter which may have implications on their participation or early withdrawal from their course. This means that funding is only available to students for the period that they are actually on the enrolment register.

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 officers will review this evidence when assessing applications, which is a statutory requirement from the DfE.

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 is received, which may result in delays to financial support through the Learner Support Fund (LSF).

Applications are assessed on a first-come first-served basis, and all applications are to 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. Attendance is reviewed and checked at specific payment points throughout the academic year. This allows the student bursary team to confirm student's ongoing eligibility for bursary support. If a student's attendance drops below expected target, for a period of four weeks or more, the student's entitlement of support may be impacted. Students must inform the student bursary team any change in circumstances.

Payments to Learners

Wherever possible, students will receive support in kind, rather than cash. In circumstances where this is not possible, payments will be made through BACS transfers directly into a student's nominated bank account. If a student nominates a third parties bank account to receive the payment it remains the sole responsibility of the student to ensure access to those funds. All payments to students will be made on specified dates as stated in the award letter sent via email.

Audit/Governance

Administration and allocation of funds will be subject to the College's normal governance and audit regulations. Audit guidance can be located on the Department for Education website. The College will keep and maintain records as evidence as required by the DfE, for audit purposes. Examples include:

- Copies of income evidence to assess entitlement
- Letters confirming a student's vulnerable status
- Invoices received from childcare providers for childcare costs

Appeals Process

Students will be formally notified in writing of the College's decision regarding their application. 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.

Upon receipt of the appeal, a review panel will be convened, consisting of the Student Experience and Wellbeing Manager and a Student Bursary Officer.

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

Support for Students Through the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Types of Support

The 16–19 Bursary Fund offers targeted, needs-assessed financial support to assist students in overcoming financial barriers to participation. Therefore, ensuring they can continue their education. Support may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- 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

Support Available with Household Income Thresholds

The LSF 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-£69,999	£70,000+
Bus Passes	YES – request on your application £5 admin fee to be paid by LSF per term	YES – request on your application £5 admin fee to be paid by LSF per term	YES – request on your application £5 admin fee to be paid by student per term	NO – Students wishing to be provided with a bus pass will pay £72 per term. £5 admin fee to be paid by student per term Applications for support for bus pass will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted
Travel Allowance	YES – request on your application (Receipts Needed)	YES – request on your application (Receipts Needed)	YES – request on your application (Receipts Needed)	NO Applications for support for Travel allowance will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted
Essential Course Uniform	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	NO Applications for support for essential course uniform will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted	NO Applications for support for essential course uniform will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted
Essential Course Related Kit and Equipment	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	NO Applications for support for course related kit and equipment will only be approved if	NO Applications for support for course related kit and equipment will only be approved

			evidence of financial hardship is submitted	if evidence of financial hardship is submitted
Meals	YES*– request on your application £3.50 per full timetabled day in college	MAYBE – request on your application If funding is available mid-year	NO Applications for support for meals will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted	NO Applications for support for meals will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted
Educational Trips	YES – request on your application A contribution will be paid towards the total cost to the department.	YES – request on your application A contribution will be paid towards the total cost to the department.	NO Applications for support for essential educational trips will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted	NO Applications for support for essential educational trips will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted
UCAS Application, University Interviews and Visits	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	NO Applications for support for UCAS, and university interviews and visits will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted	NO Applications for support for UCAS, and university interviews and visits will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted
Industry Placement Costs	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	NO Applications for support for industry placement costs will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted	NO Applications for support for industry placement costs will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted

*£2.61 per day of the allowance is funded by Free Meals in Education. When you submit your application, we will automatically assess your eligibility for Free College Meals.

Eligibility

To be eligible for 16-19 bursary funding you must either be:

- Aged 14 or 15 years old on the 31st August 2025 and be Electively Home Educated, or,
- Aged 16-18 years old on 31st August 2025, or,
- Aged 19 or over are eligible if they are continuing on a study programme that began aged 16-18 (19+ continuers), or,
- Aged 19 -24 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan

And in addition to the above,

- Satisfy the residency criteria set out in the DfE funding guidance for 2025/26

The bursary application must be completed. Assistance with completing the application is available from the Student Experience and Wellbeing Team. 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 it shows the full page down to the total payment including details of entitlement and reductions
- P60 from previous tax year
- Self-assessment tax calculation or certified accounts from previous tax year
- Tax Credit Award Notice for current tax year (showing income from previous year) 24/25

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 available on the application portal for audit purposes.

In extreme circumstances when the financial evidence is unavailable, a panel consisting of the Student Experience and Wellbeing Manager and a member of the bursary team can approve a student's application after considering an individual's circumstances. This can also be supported by a curriculum manager or a member of the safeguarding and welfare team supporting on a student's behalf if they are aware of financial hardship impacting on their student's participation on their course.

Entitlement

Travel to College

The College provides bus travel to and from college on weekdays during term time from the home address, provided at the time of application to the College. There will be a termly charge of £5 payable on receipt of the pass. The LSF will cover the cost of the termly charge 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. Any students who have not been approved via the bursary and wish to have their bus pass via college, must pay the first termly charge before being issued the pass.

An email will be sent to all bursary approved students on the contact dates explaining the payment has been taken from their bursary.

Students will only be eligible for an Arriva travel if their route is not serviced by a stagecoach bus. 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:

- Travel claims for college to be claimed by completing a travel form, which is available from student support and wellbeing.
- Evidence of receipts are presented to the student bursary team alongside the travel form.
- Student must purchase a 16/17 railcard to discount the cost by 50%. Rail tickets can be funded up to £5 per day with a receipt. Mileage can be refunded up to 25p per mile with receipt of fuel costs. 16/17 railcard can be refunded through LSF if eligible.
- The cheapest travel option must be used.

For further details on eligibility for college transport please see P8

Childcare

Students aged under 20 at the start of their course may be eligible for childcare support through the Care to Learn scheme. From the 2025/26 academic year, this scheme will be administered by the College rather than directly by the Government. Full guidance remains available on the Government website.

To be Eligible:

They must be the main carer and provide evidence that they are in receipt of Child benefit for the children for whom they are claiming childcare.

Students Undertaking Mandatory Industry Placements

Consideration will be given to students who satisfy the eligibility criteria as set out above and are undertaking mandatory industry placements to ensure that the LSF fund is used to remove barriers to participation. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the funding team if they want to be considered for this funding support.

Support for Students Through the Free College Meal Bursary Fund

Types of Support:

- Free meals entitlement allows the students to purchase a set meal from the College catering facilities
- In the event of enforced closures, students will be provided with direct payments via BACS

Eligibility

- A student must be aged 14 or 15 years old and be electively home educated, aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025 to be eligible to receive a free meal.
- Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a free meal if they are continuing on a programme, they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These 2 groups of aged 19 plus students can receive a free meal while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues.

Evidence Types

Families must be in receipt of one of the following benefits to be eligible:

- 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 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 (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

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 available on the application portal for audit purposes.

If you are experiencing financial hardship and feel that your circumstances are not covered by the above criteria or prescribed allocation, we invite you to make a written application for discretionary support to the student bursary. This application should include a full explanation of why you feel your application should be considered and what you would need funding for and how this is a barrier to your learning.

If you would like assistance with this application, please see any of the Student Experience and Wellbeing Team.

Your application will be reviewed, and you will be informed of the panel decision in writing.

Support for Students through the Vulnerable Bursary fund - (Students in Care/Care Leavers or defined vulnerable groups)

The Vulnerable Bursary Fund provides support to help students overcome the financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education. This is not an expected amount; it is based on financial need only. Therefore, it is possible that an amount cannot be claimed, or a limited amount will be available.

Types of Support

- Students receiving the funds will be assessed on their actual financial need and the amount of support required
- Support costs may include but is not limited to, free travel, free meals, and purchasing essential course related equipment where required. This will be payments in kind where possible
- Based upon assessment of need there is a possibility of no award or a limited award
- The maximum bursary is up to the value of £1,200 (pro-rated for courses lasting less than 30 weeks) in value. This will be based on individual assessment of need to participate in education.

Eligibility

- Be aged 16 to 18 years old, meet the criteria shown below and have a financial need
- Be enrolled on to a course that is funded by the DfE and falls within ONE of the following categories:
 - In care (including unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Students)
 - Care leaver
 - In receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are 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 Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

Students aged 19 or over who are continuing a course started before their 19th birthday, as well as those aged 19 to 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), will be assessed for a discretionary bursary.

Evidence

- For students who are in care, written confirmation of their current or previous looked after status. This must be provided by the relevant local authority
- For students who are in receipt of income support, a copy of their income support or Universal Credit award notice in the student's name. For students in receipt of UC, the College must also be provided with evidence of a tenancy agreement in the student's name, birth certificate or utility bill to confirm identity
- For students receiving UC/ESA and Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments. Evidence of receipt of these benefits must be provided

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 available on the bursary application portal for audit purposes.

Students Undertaking Mandatory Industry Placements

Consideration will be given to students who satisfy the eligibility criteria as set out above and are undertaking mandatory industry placements to ensure that the LSF fund is used to remove barriers to participation. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the funding team if they want to be considered for this funding support.

Support for 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 DfE Adult Skills Fund

Types of Support

The 19+ bursary fund provides support to help students overcome the financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

This could 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

Consideration will be given to any written request for additional support that will remove a financial barrier to learning.

Eligibility

- Be aged 19 or over on 31st August 2025 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 2025/26
- Be studying at a learning provider that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. OFSTED)
- Provision of learning must be funded by the ESFA or EFA or relevant authority, European Social Fund (ESF) or otherwise publicly funded and must lead to a qualification that is accredited by Ofqual or is pursuant to Section 98 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000

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 can approve a student's application after considering an individual's circumstances. This can also be supported by a curriculum manager supporting on a student's behalf or a member of the safeguarding and welfare team if they are aware of financial hardship impacting on their student's participation on their course.

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 available on the bursary application portal for audit purposes.

Travel to College

The DfE Adult Skills Fund provides bus travel to and from college on weekdays during term time from the home address, 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. There will be a termly charge of £5 payable on receipt of the pass. The DfE Adult Skills Fund will cover the cost of the termly charge for approved students. All students wishing to use transport provided by the College must have in place a completed and approved bursary application. Only one pass per student will be issued.

An email will be sent to all bursary approved students explaining the payment has been taken from their bursary.

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 apply to the bus company for a replacement which will include a fee of £15.00.

If there is not an Arriva, Stagecoach 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:

- Travel claims for college to be claimed by completing a travel form, which is available from student support and wellbeing.
- Evidence of receipts are presented to the student bursary team alongside the travel form.
- Rail tickets can be funded up to £5 per day with a receipt. Mileage can be refunded up to 25p per mile with receipt of fuel costs.
- The cheapest travel option must be used.

Childcare

- Students aged 20 years and above, on or before 31st August 2025, may be eligible for support with childcare costs up to £60 per day.
- The College notes that some eligible learners can receive free education and childcare for 2-year-olds through Government-funded nursery provision. Some eligible learners can receive free education and childcare for 3–4-year-olds from 15 hours or 30 hours of government funded nursery provision per week, both of which will be taken into consideration when allocating a bursary amount

- The childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted and complete a childcare form before the support can commence
- The contract the student has for childcare is with the childcare provider and NOT with the college
- Please understand that the student is responsible for childcare fees which have not been agreed by the student bursary team

Students will be required to provide evidence of parental responsibility for the child/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

Consideration will be given to students who satisfy the eligibility criteria as set out above and are undertaking mandatory industry placements to ensure that the LSF fund is used to remove barriers to participation. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the funding team if they want 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 – request on your application £5 admin fee to be paid by LSF per term	YES – request on your application £5 admin fee to be paid by LSF per term	YES – request on your application £5 admin fee to be paid by student per term
Travel Allowance	YES – request on your application (Receipts Needed)	YES – request on your application (Receipts Needed)	YES – request on your application (Receipts Needed)
Essential Course Uniform	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application

Essential Course Related Kit and Equipment	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application
Discretionary meals	YES – request on your application £3.50 per timetabled full day	MAYBE – request on your application If funding is available mid-year, £3.50 per time tabled full day will be allocated.	NO Applications for support for meals will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted
Educational Trips	YES – request on your application A contribution will be paid towards the total cost to the department.	YES – request on your application A contribution will be paid towards the total cost to the department.	YES – request on your application A contribution will be paid towards the total cost to the department.
UCAS Application, University Interviews and Visits	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application
Industry Placement Costs	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application
Childcare	YES- Request on your application	YES- Request on your application	YES- Request on your application

If you are experiencing financial hardship and feel that your circumstances are not covered by the above criteria or prescribed allocation, we invite you to make a written application for discretionary support to the student bursary. This application should include a full explanation of why you feel your application should be considered and what you would need funding for and how this is a barrier to your learning.

If you would like assistance with this application, please see any of the Student Experience and Wellbeing Team.

Your application will be reviewed, and you will be informed of the panel decision in writing.

Support for Students Through the Adult Learner Loan Bursary Fund

Students who have been approved for the Advanced Learner Loan from the Student Loans Company could be entitled to support with course equipment, uniform and childcare. For these students it is imperative that the loan is agreed and in place, to enable access to these funds.

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 2025/26 or until funds have been fully allocated, whichever is sooner. However, submission of an application for this support does not mean an automatic entitlement to funding and decisions are at the discretion of the college which will consider available funding. It is recommended that students apply early for any assistance with support from this fund as the amount of funding is limited.

No bursary funding will be released until you have applied directly to the Student Loans Company and your loan is approved. Your National Insurance Number must be validated by the Student Loans Company. If you fail to provide the correct evidence to the Student Loans Company and your Loan is not approved within a reasonable time, we will deem your application as unsuccessful, and any costs incurred from a childcare provider or for essential course materials or uniform will be your sole responsibility.

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 2025
- Learners must be studying an eligible Level 3 to 6 Further Education (FE) course and accessing the Advanced Learner Loan from the Student Loans Company.
- Learners must satisfy the residency criteria set out in the Advanced learning loan funding rules for 2025/2026

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

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 available on the bursary application portal for audit purposes.

Entitlement Childcare

- Students aged 20 years and above, on or before 31st August 2025, may be eligible for support with childcare costs up to £60 per day.
- The college notes that some eligible learners can receive free education and childcare for 2-year-olds through Government-funded nursery provision. Some eligible learners can receive free education and childcare for 3–4-year-olds from 15 hours or 30 hours of Government funded nursery provision per week, both of which will be taken into consideration when allocating a bursary amount. Use that first.
- The childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted and complete a childcare form before the support can commence.
- The contract the student has for childcare is with the childcare provider and NOT with the College.
- Please understand that the student is responsible for childcare fees which have not been agreed by the student bursary team.
- **Students will be required to provide evidence of parental responsibility for the child/children they are claiming childcare support for.**

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

Consideration will be given to students who satisfy the eligibility criteria as set out above and are undertaking mandatory industry placements to ensure that the LSF fund is used to remove barriers to participation. 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 from the home address, 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. There will be a termly charge of £5 payable on receipt of the pass. The Advanced Learner Loan bursary fund will cover the cost of the termly charge for approved students. All students wishing to use transport provided by the College must have in place a completed and approved bursary application. Only one pass per student will be issued.

An email will be sent to all bursary approved explaining the payment has been taken from their bursary.

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 apply to the bus company for a replacement which will include a fee of £15.00.

If there is not a Stagecoach, Arriva or dedicated bus route near their home, they can use another public transport service and the college may reimburse some of the cost, based on the following criteria:

- Travel claims for college to be claimed by completing a travel form, which is available from student support and wellbeing.
- Evidence of receipts, are presented to student bursary alongside the travel form
- Rail tickets can be funded up to £5 per day with a receipt. Mileage can be refunded up to 25p per mile with receipt of fuel costs.

Household Income

In order to be eligible for Loans Bursary funding you must provide full and complete evidence of your household income. Details of acceptable evidence can be found on the bursary application form on the College website. If you fail to provide evidence within a reasonable time, we will deem your application unsuccessful, and any costs incurred 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 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	£30,00-£35,000
Bus Passes	YES – request on your application £5 admin fee to be paid by LSF per term	YES – request on your application £5 admin fee to be paid by LSF per term	YES – request on your application £5 admin fee to be paid by student per term
Travel Allowance	YES – request on your application (Receipts Needed)	YES – request on your application (Receipts Needed)	YES – request on your application (Receipts Needed)
Essential Course Uniform	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application
Essential Course Related Kit and Equipment	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application
Discretionary Meals	YES – request on your application £3.50 per timetabled day	MAYBE – request on your application If funding is available mid-year, £3.50 per day will be allocated.	NO Applications for support for meals will only be approved if evidence of financial hardship is submitted
Educational Trips	YES – request on your application A contribution will be paid towards the total cost to the department.	YES – request on your application A contribution will be paid towards the total cost to the department.	YES – request on your application A contribution will be paid towards the total cost to the department.
UCAS Application, University Interviews and Visits	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application
Industry Placement Costs	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application	YES – request on your application
Childcare	YES- Request on your application	YES- Request on your application	YES- Request on your application

Applications Outside of Income Thresholds Prescribed Allocations.

If you are experiencing financial hardship and feel that your circumstances are not covered by the above criteria or prescribed allocation, we invite you to make a written application for discretionary

support to the student bursary. This application should include a full explanation of why you feel your application should be considered and what you would need funding for and how this is a barrier to your learning.

If you would like assistance with this application, please see any of the Student Bursary Team or visit the student bursary page on the VLE.

Your application will be reviewed, and you will be informed of the panel decision in writing.