



UCG Bursary Policy 2023

Policy Level:	
Last Review Date:	March 2022
Last Amendment Date:	March 2022
Next Review Date:	April 2023
Reviewed By:	Head of Student Support Services

1) Introduction

United Colleges Group recognises the need to widen participation, promote learning and support the attendance, retention and achievement of students by providing them with a comprehensive system of means tested financial support. The financial support available should mitigate as far as possible any barriers to learning for those students who are experiencing financial hardship.

2) PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

2.1 Purpose of the Policy

- The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework within which the College's bursary funds are set, awarded, distributed and monitored.

2.2 Scope of the Policy

- This policy should be read in conjunction with the financial Support procedures (see appendix 1).
- This policy applies to the following Learner Support funds;
 1. 16-18 Discretionary Bursary Fund (ESFA)
 2. Enhanced Bursary Scheme (ESFA)
 3. 19+Discretionary Bursary Fund (AEB)
 4. Advanced Learner Loan
 5. HE Hardship Grant (OFS)
 6. Care to Learn

3) OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that all staff and students understand the regulations and eligibility for the different financial support funds.
- To set appropriate bursary awards and payment levels considering the relevant funding agency regulations.
- To ensure that the financial support funds are distributed fairly and consistently and in line with the following funding agencies guidance ESFA, GLA AEB as the case may apply.

4) MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- This policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the Senior Leadership Team and the Colleges Board of Governors.
- A termly reconciliation of the funds will be carried out by the College Finance team in conjunction with the Bursary Manager.
- ESFA monitoring returns will be submitted as required to evidence the distribution of the funds.

5) Linked Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy

6) LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Rules and Guidelines
DLSF CRIB SHEET

1) Funds & Allocations 2022/2023

FUND	TOTAL
16-18 Discretionary Bursary Fund	£413,209.00
Vulnerable Bursary Scheme	N/A
19+ Discretionary Bursary Funds	£800,000.00
College Free meals	£206,146.00
Care to Learn	N/A
Advanced Learner Loan Bursary	£179,654
HE Bursary	£15000.00
TOTAL	£833,222.00

2) Application Information – All schemes

- In order to qualify for funding students must be participating on a course which is ESFA, AEB funded.
- Students must satisfy the residency criteria set out in the ESFA / AEB funding guidance to receive funding.
- All forms of financial support offered by the college are subject to the availability of funds. Once funds have been exhausted, the College cannot be held responsible for the costs incurred, nor can the College offer back payments if additional funding is provided by the government.

3) Application Process

- The financial support fund application process will open on Thursday 25th August 2022 for all enrolled students.
- The bursary fund may close for applications if the demand on funds is greater than anticipated to ensure that the college is able to financially meet their commitments.
- An application on the colleges Bursary App -(PayMyStudent) must be completed in full and submitted with the required documentation in order for the application to be considered.
- Funds will not be released until all documentary evidence has been received and the application has been fully approved.

4) Eligibility

4.1 Discretionary Bursary

- Aged 16 and over who are studying on course funded by the ESFA.
- Students over 19 and who are in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan will be funded through the 16-18 discretionary bursary fund.
- Have an annual household income below £30,000 gross.
- Students who meet the residency criteria as set out in the ESFA funding guidance (see page 15 in the guidance below).

[16 to 19 funding: information for 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-information-for-2022-to-2023)

- Students studying on higher education programs

Students aged over 19 studying an AEB funded programme

- Adults Learners who work and earn under £30,000 might be entitled to **free tuition** for L1 or L2 courses.
- Adult Learners who are in receipt of **means-tested state benefits** such as Universal Credit, Employment & Support Allowance, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance may be eligible for free tuition for L1 or L2 courses (Please see the DLSF CRIB sheet below for more details)

[Adult education budget \(AEB\) funding rules 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2022-to-2023)

4.2 Enhanced Bursary Scheme

Students must be under 19 on 31st August 2022. Students eligible for up to £1200 Bursary are as follows;

- Students in care
- Care leavers
- Students receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves
- Students who are receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

4.3 Free Meals

- Students who are between 16–18 on 31st August 2022 and subject to the following criteria, will be eligible for free meals. Students who turn 19 during the academic year are still eligible for that year.
- For the purposes of eligibility for free meals, 'disadvantage' is defined by the students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits;
 - Income Support

- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of no more than £21,000, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7400 pa
- 19–24-year old subject to LDA (Learning Disability Assessment) or an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) are eligible for free meals.
- Student who are supported under Section 95 (NASS).
- Students on work experience or off-site visits etc. will also be eligible.

4.4 Care to Learn

- Students must be under the age of 20 on the first day of the course.
- Students are either a British citizen or have a legal right to live and study in England.
- Must be the main carer for the child and in receipt of child benefit for the child.
- Be using an eligible (OFSTED registered) childcare provider.

4.5 Advanced Learner Loan Bursary

- Students must not be eligible for the discretionary or vulnerable bursary scheme and fully complete the Advanced Learner Loan application form.
- Students have the ability to apply for meals, travel and essential electronic equipment.
- Students must be able to demonstrate a financial hardship to be eligible for all awards.
- To be eligible for travel students must live further than 1 mile away from the college.
- To receive essential electronic equipment students are required to confirm that they do not have access to the appropriate electronic equipment to enable them to study remotely.
- Where a prospective student chooses to access an Advance Learner Loan and decides to pay some of the fees themselves then an instalment plan is available if the remaining fee is over £750 and the course is 16 weeks or longer in duration. In this case an instalment plan over 3 instalments is available.
- A refundable £100 deposit must be paid by the 24th August 2022 for all learners where they are unable to provide evidence from the SLC that they will be paying the College. An application request made by the learner is insufficient evidence. The learner will be liable for the fees until the SLC have confirmed they are

paying. If the loan has not been confirmed by the 28th day of the course, fees will become payable as follows: 1 October (34% of course fees), 1 December (33%) and 1 February (33%).

- Where a learner withdraws from their programme and has already received a learning loan, assuming that the course has been running for 28 calendar days, the balance of any fee not met by the SLC will become payable by the student.

5) Demonstrating a Financial Need

Learners demonstrating a financial need will be awarded funds according to their actual category of need.

Categories	Range	Free Meals	Additional Bursary Elements
1) Free Meals threshold and under	<i>Tax Credit</i> £0 - £16,190 <i>Universal Credit</i> £0 - £7,400	Eligible for <u>Guaranteed</u> Meals	Actual category of need which may include: Travel, materials (Books & Equipment) other specified on course costs
2) Free meals threshold and above but below £21,000 pa	<i>Tax Credit</i> £16,191 - £21,000 <i>Universal Credit</i> £7,401 – £21,000	Eligible for <u>Discretionary</u> Meals if in financial need	Actual category of need which may include: Travel, materials (Books & Equipment) other specified on course costs
3) Income above £23,000 but below maximum income threshold £30,000 pa	<i>Tax Credit</i> £23,001 - £30,000 <i>Universal Credit</i> £23,001 - £30,000	Eligible for <u>Discretionary</u> Meals if in financial need	Actual category of need which may include: Travel, materials (Books & Equipment) other specified on course costs
4) Income above maximum Gross Household income threshold £30,000 pa		Not Eligible	Not Eligible

5.1 Enhanced Bursary Scheme

- To meet the eligibility criteria for the vulnerable bursary students must submit one of the following;
 - A letter from Local Authority Children's Services confirming their 'Looked After' status
 - A letter from Local Authority Children's Services confirming 'Leaving Care' status
 - A letter from Benefits Agency confirming Income Support Benefit or Universal Credit
 - A letter from Benefits Agency confirming Personal Independence Payment, Universal Credit, Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance are being made in the student's name

5.2 Discretionary Bursary - Combined Household income below £30,000

- To meet the eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursary students must submit one of the following;
 - Tax Credit/Universal Credit Award Notice for household all pages (current tax year)
 - 3 recent pay slips
 - Any current benefits agency letter dated after 1st April 2022
 - Pension Credit Award Notice for current year
 - Asylum Seekers documents/letter from Home Office and recent Post Office benefit receipt
 - 2 months bank statements (dated in the last 3 months) showing benefits or wages being paid
- Students whose parents are self-employed or will be required to provide a recent copy of certified accounts for the business or a recent Working Tax Credit Assessment.
- Students living independently or who are estranged from their parents/guardians will be assessed on their individual gross income.
- Students who live with their parents or guardian but who can demonstrate that they are financially independent will be assessed on their individual income.

6) Type of Discretionary Bursary Support

- The support categories available to students have been detailed below;
 - Free College Meals
 - Material – to purchase equipment, books and materials (Books where the option to loan the book from the Library is not available)

- Travel - for students living more than 15 minutes' walk away from the College where
- Essential IT equipment to enable students to work remotely where the option to loan one is not available.
- Educational visits and trips (dependent on the availability of funds)
- Exceptional extra costs (UCAS payments, open days etc.)
- Eligible students are required to choose either travel, bursary or essential IT equipment.

7) Payments & Award Process

- Payments for all awards are based on students meeting the colleges attendance, punctuality and behaviour expectations which have been outlined below;
 - Attendance – must meet the college expectation of 87% Weekly attendance.
 - There must be no concerns regarding behaviour or attitude to learning
- Should additional funds be available consideration will be given to the most appropriate ways of distributing this to students in financial hardship.

7.1 Free Meals

- A daily payment of £4.00 will be allocated to eligible students for each day they are in the college. These funds are for the purchase of meals in the colleges catering outlets and if not used will be reallocated to other eligible students.
- Payments for free meals are made to students via their ID card on a daily basis. Funds can be used in any of the colleges catering outlets.
- A payment directly into the student's bank account will be made in the weeks that they are undertaking work experience placements. (Including eligible students studying at Off-Site).
- Students on work experience and on trips will be provided with the funds to purchase a meal whilst offsite. This will usually be a payment directly in to the student's bank account. (Paid Fortnightly).

7.2 Discretionary Bursary

- Students will be able to view their individualized payments schedule on the Student Bursary Application Portal. Including assessment outcomes
- Payments will be made following the approval of the application and will not be backdated for applications made after 19th December 2022

7.3 Travel

- 16-18s can travel for free by bus on TFL network using their Zip card. Where the journey on a Bus is longer than 30min, the additional travel cost is awarded to the learner.

- Adult Travel award is provided for those students living more than 2miles or 15minutes walk away from their campus.
- Students living within 2 mile or 15 minutes walking distance of their campus will only be eligible for travel support in exceptional circumstances e.g. when a student has medical evidence to suggest walking would have a detrimental effect on their health.
- Subject to the above criteria being met travel costs will be paid as follows;
 - A retrospective payment, by BACs of the cost of travel by the current TFL rate will be paid fortnightly to student's bank accounts subject to meeting the 87% weekly attendance criteria.
 - Where students do not have a bank account, Travel card / TFL Bus tickets will be provided by Student Advisors and Bursary Administrators.).

7.4 Essential IT Equipment

- Students that do not have the appropriate IT equipment to enable them to study remotely can borrow a Laptop from the LRC.
- All equipment will be purchased by the college and set up as per the college student computers. The usage of every device will be monitored in line with the college's IT Acceptable Useage Policy.
- Students will be responsible for the security and general condition of the equipment.
- The college will not be responsible for replacing this should it be misplaced or broken.
- Students will be expected to return the laptop or other Equipment to the college at the end of their studies.

7.5 Educational Visits and Trips

- Payments will only be made for department organised visits which are deemed to be of an educational nature.
- Payment will be made for each student who is eligible for funding.

7.6 Exceptional Extra Costs

- The College also holds emergency funding to help students who face particular short-term financial hardship. Each instance will be considered on its own merits.
- If an exceptional or extra cost is determined to be necessary, then a one-off payment will be made to the student.

7.7 Enhanced Bursary Scheme

- For eligible students the vulnerable bursary will normally comprise of 35 weekly payments of up to £34.28 paid fortnightly totaling £1,199.80.

- Students that are eligible for additional award to their Free College Meal(FCM) will be dependent upon the relevant need established between key worker and college liaison officer (Student Advisor).

7.8 Withdrawals

- If a student withdraws from their course within 4 weeks of the start date, 100% of funds allocated to them and/or equipment purchased for them will be required to be returned. Funds will be re-allocated accordingly.

7.9 Appeals

- Appeals must be made in writing within one week to the Student Services department by emailing bursary@ucg.ac.uk review of the decision will be based on the information available. The outcome of the appeal will be sent to the student within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.

Appendix

RULES AND GUIDELINES

8. Assessment and Eligibility Criteria

8.1. All bursaries are means tested and based on household income. Learners who have a household income up to £30,000 may apply.

8.2. All income and benefits (working tax credits and child maintenance, child tax credits, etc.) are taken into account. The College does not consider Child Benefit, Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment and Housing Benefit when calculating total household income on Universal Credit.

8.3. For parents/guardians or students who are self-employed, the College will assess income based on Gross profit, but considering any business expenditure. For example, household items, mortgage and food would not be deducted from Gross profit but servicing of machinery, stationery, etc. would be deducted.

8.4. An assessment is made based on a completed and signed online declaration from the learner and parent/guardian (dependent upon age and

circumstance of learner) detailing income from employment and/or benefits along with supporting evidence of all declared income.

8.5. The number of dependent children is taken into consideration. The College will allow a further £1000 of income (£30,000 threshold) per additional dependent child living at the same household as the applicant to recognise additional household costs.

8.6. In order for funding to be awarded, the College expects that certain standards of behaviour and attendance will be met. Learners are expected to meet college standards of attendance. In circumstances where a learner is involved in disciplinary proceedings or has poor attendance, funding may be withheld or reclaimed at the College's discretion.

8.7. The College can only guarantee bursary award for applicants applying by the 26th of September 2022. Applications made after this date will be awarded if there is funding available.

8.8. Where a learner is continuing their studies into another academic year or change their course, a further application will be required as eligibility and financial need may change.

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Bursary Team August 2022

RULES AND GUIDELINES

DLSF CRIB SHEET – 2022/23		
Applicant Type <i>(Please check age as of 31st August)</i>	Evidence 1 <i>(Required)</i>	Evidence 2 <i>(Please follow this column only if Evidence 1 is not available to you)</i>
Category 1: 16-18 Living in the care of social services	<p><i>Students should provide ONE of the following bullet points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from social worker confirming care status – MUST BE DATED IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS • Local Authority letter / contact of keyworker. • Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements – NO SCREENSHOTS 	<i>Not Applicable – Please follow evidence 1)</i>
Category 2: 16-18 Living with a parent / Guardian	<p><i>Students should provide their child benefit letter dated in the last three months PLUS ONE of the following bullet points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements – (NO SCREENSHOTS) • All pages of tax credit letter 2022 -2023 • All pages of FINAL tax credits for 2021-22 • All pages of Annual review tax credits for year ended April 2022. • EESA / JSA / Income Support / Pension Credit Guarantee letter dated in the last three months 	<i>Not Applicable – Please follow evidence 1)</i>

<p>Category 3: 19 -25 with an Educational Health Care Plan</p>	<p><i>Students should provide their EHCP Plan PLUS ONE of the following bullet points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements in students OWN name– (NO SCREENSHOTS) • EESA / Income Support Letter dated in the last three months in student’s OWN name. 	<p><i>If you cannot provide evidence in Evidence 1, please refer to Category 4.</i></p>
<p>Category 4: 19-21 living with parent / guardian and not working</p>	<p><i>Students should provide ONE of the following bullet points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements – (NO SCREENSHOTS) PLUS child benefit letter or birth certificate • All pages of tax credit letter 2022 -2023 • All pages of FINAL tax credits for 2021-22 • All pages of Annual review tax credits for year ended April 2022. • EESA / JSA / Income Support / Pension Credit Guarantee letter dated in the last three months PLUS child benefit or birth certificate 	<p><i>Not Applicable – Please follow evidence 1)</i></p>
<p>Category 5: 19+ Living independently</p>	<p><i>Students should provide ONE of the following bullet points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit 	<p><i>Students must provide ALL of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All last three months FULL payslips / P60 for year ended April 2022.

	<p>Payment statements – (NO SCREENSHOTS) PLUS child benefit letter dated in the last three months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pages of tax credit letter 2022 -2023 • All pages of FINAL tax credits for 2021-22 • All pages of Annual review tax credits for year ended April 2022. • EESA / JSA / Income Support / Pension Credit Guarantee letter dated in the last three months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy Agreement showing address, tenant name and rent amount • Housing benefit (If applicable) letter dated in the last three months • All other evidence that may support your application.
<p>Category 6: 19+ Living with a partner</p>	<p><i>Students should provide ONE of the following bullet points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements – (NO SCREENSHOTS) • All pages of tax credit letter 2022 -2023 • All pages of FINAL tax credits for 2021-22 • All pages of Annual review tax credits for year ended April 2022. • EESA / JSA / Income Support / Pension Credit Guarantee letter dated in the last three months 	<p><i>Students must provide ALL of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All last three months FULL payslips / P60 for year ended April 2022 for you and partner. • • • t name (you and partner) and rent amount • Housing benefit (If applicable) • Full Marriage Certificate • All other evidence that may support your application.
<p>Category 7: NASS / Hestia (ID Card showing ‘Employment forbidden’)</p>	<p><i>Students should provide ONE of the following bullet points:</i></p> <p>NASS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should provide a section 95 letter from the home office confirming they are in receipt of NASS – This should include 	<p><i>Not Applicable – Please follow evidence 1)</i></p>

	<p>the student's name, NASS reference and Date of birth – Letter should be dated in the last three months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspen Card Letter with students name and address and aspen card. • Bank Receipt of Aspen Card dated in the last three months. <p>HESTIA – Students should provide a letter from Hestia dated in the last three months confirming they are being supported by the charity. Student's name, date of birth and time started with Hestia should be included in the letter.</p>	
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