



# UCG Bursary Policy 2023

Policy Level:	
Last Review Date:	April 2023
Last Amendment Date:	July 2023
Next Review Date:	April 2024
Reviewed By:	Head of Student Support Services

## **1) Introduction**

United Colleges Group recognizes the need to increase student participation, promote learning, and encourage students' attendance, retention, and success by providing means-tested financial support to remove as many potential barriers as possible to educational success. This policy outlines the parameters within which the College's bursary funds are to be set, awarded, distributed, and monitored. It outlines objectives for ensuring that the financial support funds are distributed fairly. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Rules and Guidelines (CRIB Sheet) in the list of appendices.

The funds taken into consideration are the

- 16-18 Discretionary Bursary Fund (ESFA),
- Enhanced Bursary Scheme (ESFA),
- Care to Learn
- 19+Discretionary Bursary Fund (AEB),
- Advanced Learner Loan,
- HE Hardship Grant (OFS),

## **2) Objectives**

The purpose is to guarantee that all staff and students have a clear understanding of the rules and eligibility criteria for various bursary support categories.

- Establish suitable bursary awards and payment amounts, considering the regulations of the relevant funding agencies.
- Ensure that the distribution of financial support funds is fair, uniform, and adheres to the guidance of funding agencies such as ESFA and GLA AEB, as applicable.

## **3) Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Senior Leadership Team and the Colleges Board of Governors will review this policy on an annual basis and provide their approval.

- The College Finance team, in collaboration with the Bursary Manager, will conduct a reconciliation of the funds on a termly basis.
- The necessary ESFA monitoring returns will be submitted to demonstrate the proper distribution of the funds.

#### 4) Linked Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy

#### 5) LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - RULES AND GUIDELINES (Assessment and Eligibility Criteria)
- Appendix 2 – Financial Support Procedures DLSF CRIB SHEET

#### 1) Funds & Allocations 2023/2024

<b>FUND</b>	<b>Amount</b>
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	£179,654.00
HE Bursary	£15,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,614,009.00</b>

#### 2.) Application Information – All schemes

- To be eligible for funding, students must be enrolled on a course that is funded by the ESFA or AEB.
- Students must meet the residency requirements outlined in the ESFA / AEB funding guidance to be eligible for funding.
- The availability of funds determines the availability of all types of financial support offered by the college. Once funds have been depleted, the college cannot be held responsible for any incurred costs. Furthermore, the college is unable to offer retroactive payments even if additional government funding becomes available.

#### 3.) Application Process

- The application process for the financial support fund will commence on Monday, August 21st, 2023, and will be open to all enrolled students.

- If the demand for funds exceeds expectations, the bursary fund may close for new applications to ensure the college can meet its financial obligations.
- To have their application considered, students must complete and submit a comprehensive application through the college's Bursary App (PayMyStudent) along with the required documentation. (paper based application forms are available for our Supported Learners who might not be able to complete their bursary application online – this information is then uploaded by designated LS staff.)
- Funds will only be disbursed once all necessary documentary evidence has been received and the application has been fully approved.

## **4) Eligibility**

### **4.1 16-18 Discretionary Bursary & 19+ Discretionary Bursary**

- Students aged 16 or older who are enrolled in an ESFA-funded course are eligible.
- Students over the age of 19 who have an Education Health and Care Plan will be funded through the 16-18 discretionary bursary fund.
- Students with an annual household income below £30,000 gross are eligible.
- Residency criteria outlined in the ESFA funding guidance must be met by students (refer to page 15 in the guidance document).

[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 enrolled in higher education programs are eligible.
- Adult learners over the age of 19 studying an AEB funded program are eligible.
- Adult learners who work and earn under £30,000 may be entitled to free tuition for Level 1 or Level 2 courses.
- Adult learners 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 Level 1 or Level 2 courses. (Please refer to the DLSF CRIB sheet for more details)

[Adult education budget \(AEB\)](#)

### **4.2 Enhanced Bursary Scheme (NVG)**

Students must be under 19 on 31st August 2023. 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 the ages of 16-18 by August 31st, 2023, and meet certain criteria are eligible to receive free meals. This eligibility extends to students who turn 19 during the academic year. To qualify, students or their parents must receive one or more of the following benefits:

Income Support,

Income-based Jobseeker's 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 (with an annual gross income of no more than £21,000),

Working Tax Credit run-on, or Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per year.

Additionally, students aged 19-24 with a Learning Disability Assessment (LDA) or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), as well as students supported under Section 95 (NASS) and those on work experience or off-site visits, are also eligible for free meals.

### **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**

To be eligible for the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary, students must meet the following criteria:

- They should not qualify for the discretionary or vulnerable bursary schemes.
- They need to complete the Advanced Learner Loan application form.
- Students can apply for assistance with meals, travel, and essential electronic equipment.
- Financial hardship must be demonstrated to be eligible for all awards.
- Students must live more than 1 mile away from the college to be eligible for travel support.
- To receive essential electronic equipment, students need to confirm their lack of access to suitable equipment for remote studying.
- If students choose to pay a portion of their fees while still accessing an Advanced Learner Loan, they can opt for an instalment plan over 3 instalments if the remaining fee is over £750 and the course is at least 16 weeks long.
- A refundable deposit of £100 must be paid by August 24, 2023, for all learners who cannot provide evidence from the Student Loans Company (SLC) confirming they will be paying the college. Application requests from learners alone are not sufficient evidence. Learners will be responsible for fees until the SLC confirms payment. If the loan has not been confirmed.

## 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	<b>Eligible for <u>Guaranteed</u> Meals</b>	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	<b>Eligible for <u>Discretionary</u> Meals</b> 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	<b>Eligible for <u>Discretionary</u> Meals</b> 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		<b>Not Eligible</b>	<b>Not Eligible</b>

### **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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023
  - 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 Travel awards are based on students meeting the colleges attendance, punctuality and behavior expectations which have been outlined below;
  - Attendance – must meet the college expectation of 87% Weekly attendance.
  - There must be no concerns regarding behavior 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.
- Retroactive payments will only be made two months in areas and not later; with exception to applications where there is an active effort to complete missing details.

### **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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 Usage 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.
- All awards and support including 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](mailto:bursary@ucg.ac.uk) ; review of the decision will be based on the information provided by the student and those available on our systems. The outcome of the appeal will be sent to the student within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.

**Richard Ojei**  
**Bursary Manager**

**Diana Brown**  
**Head of Student Support Services**

**Bursary Team July 2023**

## **Appendix 1**

### **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. For funding to be awarded, the College expects that certain standard 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

26<sup>th</sup> of September 2023. 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.

## Appendix 2 – Rules and Guidelines DLSF CRIB SHEET

DLSF CRIB SHEET – 2023/2024		
Applicant Type <i>(Please check age as of 31<sup>st</sup> 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>Students should provide <b>ONE</b> of the following bullet points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter from social worker confirming care status – MUST BE DATED IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS (letter must state type of support required e.g., free meals, Travel</li> <li>• Local Authority letter / contact of keyworker.</li> <li>• Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements – NO SCREENSHOTS</li> </ul>	Not Applicable – Please follow evidence 1)

<p>Category 2: 16-18 Living with a parent / Guardian</p>	<p><b>Students should provide their <i>child benefit letter dated in the last three months OR full birth certificate PLUS ONE of the following bullet points:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements (Screenshots accepted)</li> <li>• All pages of tax credit letter <b>2023 -2024</b></li> <li>• All pages of FINAL tax credits for <b>2022-23</b></li> <li>• All pages of Annual review tax credits for <b>year ended April 2023.</b></li> <li>• EESA / JSA / Income Support / Pension Credit Guarantee</li> <li>• letter dated in the last three months</li> </ul>	<p>Students must provide <b>ALL</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All last three months FULL payslips / P60 for year ended April 2023.</li> <li>• Tenancy Agreement showing address, tenant name and rent amount</li> <li>• Housing benefit (If applicable) letter dated in the last three months</li> </ul> <p>All other evidence that may support your application.</p>
<p>Category 3: 19 -25 with an Educational Health Care Plan</p>	<p><b>Students should provide their <i>EHCP Plan PLUS ONE of the following bullet points:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements in students OWN name– (NO SCREENSHOTS)</li> </ul>	<p><i>If you cannot provide evidence in Evidence 1, please refer to Category 4.</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EESA / Income Support Letter dated in the last three months in student's OWN name.</li> </ul>	
Category 4: 19-21 living with parent / guardian and not working	<p><i>Students should provide <b>ONE</b> of the following bullet points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements (Screenshots accepted)</li> <li>• All pages of tax credit letter <b>2023 -2024</b></li> <li>• All pages of FINAL tax credits for <b>2022-23</b></li> <li>• All pages of Annual review tax credits for <b>year ended April 2023.</b></li> <li>• EESA / JSA / Income Support / Pension Credit Guarantee letter dated in the last three months <b>PLUS</b> child benefit or birth certificate</li> </ul>	<p><i>Students must provide <b>ALL</b> of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All last three months FULL payslips / P60 for year ended April 2023.</li> <li>• Tenancy Agreement showing address, tenant name and rent amount</li> <li>• Housing benefit (If applicable) letter dated in the last three months</li> </ul> <p>All other evidence that may support your application</p>
Category 5: 19+ Living independently	<p><i>Students should provide <b>ONE</b> of the following bullet points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements (Screenshots accepted)</li> <li>• All pages of tax credit letter <b>2023 -2024</b></li> <li>• All pages of FINAL tax credits for <b>2022-23</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Students must provide <b>ALL</b> of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All last three months FULL payslips / P60 for year ended April 2023.</li> <li>• Tenancy Agreement showing address, tenant name and rent amount</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All pages of Annual review tax credits for <b>year ended April 2023.</b></li> <li>• EESA / JSA / Income Support / Pension Credit Guarantee letter dated in the last three months <b>PLUS</b> child benefit or birth certificate</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing benefit (If applicable) letter dated in the last three months</li> <li>• All other evidence that may support your application.</li> </ul>
Category 6: 19+ Living with a partner	<p><i>Students should provide <b>ONE</b> of the following bullet points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully printed/PDF copy of the Last 3 months Universal Credit Payment statements (Screenshots accepted)</li> <li>• All pages of tax credit letter <b>2023 -2024</b></li> <li>• All pages of FINAL tax credits for <b>2022-23</b></li> <li>• All pages of Annual review tax credits for <b>year ended April 2023.</b></li> <li>• EESA / JSA / Income Support / Pension Credit Guarantee letter dated in the last three months <b>PLUS</b> child benefit or birth certificate</li> </ul>	<p><i>Students must provide <b>ALL</b> of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All last three months FULL payslips / P60 for year ended April 2023 for <b>you and partner.</b></li> <li>• Tenancy Agreement showing address, tenant name (you and partner) and rent amount</li> <li>• Housing benefit (If applicable)</li> <li>• Full Marriage Certificate</li> <li>• All other evidence that may support your application.</li> </ul>
Category 7: NASS / Hestia (ID Card showing 'Employment forbidden')	<p><i>Students should provide <b>ONE</b> of the following bullet points:</i></p> <p><b>NASS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students should provide a section 95</li> </ul>	<p><i>Not Applicable – Please follow evidence 1)</i></p>



	<p>letter from the home office confirming they are in receipt of NASS – This should include 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"> <li>• Aspen Card Letter with student’s name and address and aspen card and Bank Receipt of Aspen Card dated in the last three months.</li> </ul> <p><b>HESTIA</b> – 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>	
--	--	--