

STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT 2024-25



Introduction

A policy and guidelines for financial support for students at Leeds College of building. This includes 16-19 Bursary Fund and 19+ Learner Support Fund.

Reviewed June 2024

Next review June 2025

Background

Leeds College of Building (LCB) receives government funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for students aged 16-18 and for students aged 19+. This funding is to support eligible students studying Government funded Further Education courses and to help students meet the costs of participating in education and training post 16.

The college aims to use the available funding to offer financial support to as many eligible students as possible. Therefore, it's reviewed the financial barriers to learning and created the policy to make further education more accessible.

Enrolling on a learning programme or course can be expensive. Therefore, before a student starts a course consideration should be given to costs such as travel costs, equipment, materials, meals and PPE.

To ensure finance is not a barrier to enrolment, the College will promote ESFA funds and other sources of financial assistance. The following guidelines state how the funds are allocated and prioritised.

This policy will cover two support funds. Firstly, the 16-18 bursary support fund that is available to our students aged between 16-18 years. The second fund is the 19+ learner support fund that is aimed at students who are over the age of 19.

In addition to these funds, the college has the flexibility to offer discretionary financial support to students who have proven hardships.

Policy Statement

The aim of this policy is to:

- Create a process for financial support which is fair and consistent in line with the regulations laid out by funding agencies.
- To make sure that the information provided to students on financial support is accurate.
- Monitor and review the process on a regular basis.

Leeds College of building will strive to make sure no student needs to withdraw from their course due to the lack of financial support.

The college will take steps to ensure all eligible students can apply for financial support, thus supporting widening participation and the provision of learning for under-represented groups.

In addition, the college's application process ensures that all applications for financial support are dealt with efficiently and fairly with regular reviews on the effectiveness of the financial support available.

Exceptional Circumstances

All financial support will be based on the individual's financial needs. In exceptional circumstances, if a student's personal circumstances mean that the existing financial support doesn't remove all restrictions from them being able to attend college, the college will look to support further with their own discretionary support fund.

The college support fund is supported by JAST and any request will be reviewed by the college's Senior Leadership Team and any financial support will be on a discretionary basis.

16-18 Bursary Fund

The 16-18 bursary fund is for further education students aged between 16 and 18 with the exception of student's with an EHCP who can receive this until they're 19.

The 16-18 bursary fund is split into two categories. The first is awarded to under 19's on courses that meet the ESFA eligibility criteria and are struggling to meet the costs associated with attending college.

The second is a vulnerable bursary that is awarded to those studying on courses that meet the ESFA eligibility criteria as well as being in care/care leavers, in receipt of universal credit, in receipt of disability living allowance or employment support allowance. This type of funding is awarded up to £1200 and is reserved for vulnerable groups who are unlikely to receive any financial support from parents or carers. The amount awarded will depend on the number of days timetabled to attend college, distance they live from college and other personal circumstances that may affect their ability to attend.

The types of support available is awarded on a discretionary basis but can include free bus passes for the academic year, vouchers towards equipment/site clothing and meal vouchers. Anyone in receipt of the vulnerable bursary may also receive regular payments made by BACs transfer depending on their circumstances.

The allocation of funding support will be dependent on the students individual needs and they're required to abide by the college's code of conduct, meet their learning objectives and show good attendance and behaviour.

16-18 Bursary Fund Eligibility

To be eligible for the 16-18 Bursary Fund, students must be under 19 on the 31st August in the academic year in which they start their studies. Students will also satisfy residency criteria and be enrolled on a ESFA approved course. Students studying on a HE course, an apprenticeship or young people released on a temporary license from custody will not be eligible.

In addition, the household gross income for the financial year needs to be below £35,000. For further information on eligibility, contact the team on bursary@lcb.ac.uk

16-18 Bursary Fund Application

All students looking to receive financial support will need to complete an application form. As part of this, they will need to provide evidence to support their application. From the point of receiving both the application form and the suitable evidence, the applications will take around 28 days to process.

If the request for financial support has been granted, the student will be notified by email and provided with next steps.

16-18 Bursary Fund Evidence

In most cases, financial evidence is required to support the bursary fund application. The types of evidence that we'll accept include:

- Tax credit award notice - require all pages
- Universal Credit - letter dated within the last three months
- All current welfare benefit - letter dated within the last three months
- Housing/ Council tax benefit
- Self Assessment Tax calculator for relevant year - if self employed
- Asylum Seekers documents/ letter from Home Office as well as recent Post Office benefit receipt

19+ Learner Support Fund

The 19+ Learner Support Fund provides financial help to eligible students aged 19+. The fund is means tested and the amount a student may receive depends upon their family gross household income. The fund can help meet costs such as travel, equipment, examination and registration charges and childcare. The fund provides support to students who are experiencing financial hardship and have a household income of under £35,000 per year.

Awards from the fund are made to individual students on a discretionary basis. Any award is made subject to satisfactory College attendance and meeting the College's code of conduct.

The evidence required to support the application will be as follows:

- Tax credit award notice - require all pages
- Universal Credit - letter dated within the last three months
- All current welfare benefit - letter dated within the last three months
- Housing/ Council tax benefit
- Self Assessment Tax calculator for relevant year - if self employed
- Asylum Seekers documents/ letter from Home Office as well as recent Post Office benefit receipt

Childcare Support

Students who are ineligible for help from schemes such as Care to Learn can apply for discretionary childcare support. The college will only pay childcare up to the amount allocated for each academic year (£3,000.00 per student). If a student's childcare costs exceed their LSF allocation then the student is liable for any additional fees incurred. Childcare will only be paid for the days a student attends College.

Should a student cease to attend or withdraw from LCB at any point during the academic year, financial support for childcare will finish on the last date of recorded attendance. The responsibility for childcare costs reverts to the student from that date.

Students will be expected to use any free childcare government allowances before applying for funds

Managing Data

The college abides by GDPR guidelines when managing data. All applications are made digitally and the successful applications are recorded on the college's CRM.

The college is mindful that a portion of students may live in digital poverty, the college will assist a student with their digital application and if required will offer a paper based application form or the means to apply online. Any paper based applications will be held securely.

Review and Monitor

The funds are designed to reduce the barriers to learning and continuous review on how these are distributed is required on an annual basis. The following financial barriers have been identified and will be prioritised through the support funds:

- Access to both breakfast and lunch
- Cost of travel to college
- Childcare
- Warm clothing whilst working in workshops and on work placements
- PPE

Additional financial barriers will be assessed on a discretionary basis.

The effective use of the funds will be reviewed through internal audits, ESFA audits, Student feedback and the annual policy review.

Right to Appeal

All financial support awarded will be made in accordance to what is outlined in this policy. If a learner disagrees with the award decision, they have the right to appeal.

To appeal against the outcome of their application decision, they must do so within 10 working days.

The first stage is to discuss their application with the college to understand why their application was unsuccessful. If a learner feels that the decision made was unfair, they should state the reasons in writing to bursary@lcb.ac.uk who will review the application.

If after this review, the student still feels the decision was unfair, the final stage of appeal is to write to the Head of Marketing & Student Recruitment who will review the application form against this policy and will make a final decision.