

Policy Statement

The 16-19 Bursary Fund will provide financial assistance for learners who are finding it most difficult to participate in learning through financial hardship. The fund will be distributed in a consistent and equitable way and in accordance with the guidance issued by the Education Funding Agency.

Writtle University College has determined that funds will be allocated to cover the essential costs it deems necessary, for learners to complete their Study Programme. Support is limited and cannot cover all costs associated with all Study Programmes. Funds will generally be paid directly to the learner.

Meal Allowance is targeted at disadvantaged students. These can be received if your application falls into category 1, 2 or 3.

Each application is individually assessed and **all assistance is subject to the availability of funds**. Learners who are eligible for support are not automatically

entitled to it. If demand exceeds the availability of funds, reduced awards may be given and when the fund is fully committed, no further awards will be made.

All on-going bursary payments will be subject to a minimum of 90% attendance and meeting WUC expectations of coursework and behaviour or payments may be withheld. Learners are responsible for monitoring their attendance and addressing any queries.

Applications are assessed against household income within three categories. Means testing will be rigorous but not excessive and supporting evidence of personal circumstances and/or relevant benefit evidence will be required. Other sources of financial support will be taken into consideration when processing applications.

Category	Criteria	Bursary Support Available
Category 1	<p>Learners who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In care • Care Leavers • 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 • In receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right 	<p>A vulnerable learner bursary up to £1,200 per academic year is available. The following costs can be offered and may be deducted from the total award. The bursary may not be given if there is no financial need. Awards from this bursary cannot be used to support living costs.</p> <p>Course Costs: clothing, books, equipment and materials deemed to be necessary to complete your Study Programme may be paid.</p> <p>Food Allowance: maximum £4.00 per day</p> <p>Travel: assistance with travel costs.</p>
Category 2	<p>Financial assistance for those who are dependent on someone in receipt of the following benefits;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support • Job Seekers Allowance (income based) • Employment Support Allowance (Income related) • Guarantee element of State Pension Credit • Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) • Universal Credit 	<p>Course Costs: clothing, books, equipment and materials deemed to be necessary to complete your Study Programme may be paid.</p> <p>Food Allowance: maximum £4.00 per day</p> <p>Travel: assistance with travel costs.</p>

Category 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial assistance for those who are dependent on someone in receipt of Working Tax Credits and/or earning/self-employed with a total net income of up to £35,000 	<p>Course Costs: clothing, books, equipment and materials deemed to be necessary to complete your Study Programme may be paid.</p> <p>Food Allowance: maximum £4.00 per day</p> <p>Travel: assistance with travel costs.</p>
<p>Applications from households with an income exceeding £35,000 are not normally considered. However, if you feel that you have extenuating circumstances, please submit an application and provide a covering letter to explain your situation. Supporting evidence should also be provided.</p>		

Eligibility

- To be eligible for support, students must be classified as being:
- Enrolled on a funded Study Programme
- Meet the residency criteria in ESFA funding regulations
- Age 16 or over but under 19 years of age on 31st August 2020
- 19 years of age and started a two-year programme before their 19th birthday
- In care, a care leaver, receive or be dependent on someone who receives a relevant benefit
- And/or can demonstrate a genuine financial hardship which is causing a barrier to learning

Groups not eligible for financial assistance

- Students on apprenticeships or waged training
- Learners on Higher Education (HE) courses
- Learners serving a custodial sentence or released on temporary license

Financial Award Conditions

In order to receive financial awards, learners must achieve a satisfactory attendance of 90% and above and meet WUC expectations of coursework and behaviour. If attendance does not meet the requirements, payments can be withheld, subject to a progress review with the learner's course tutor. Personal circumstances will be taken into consideration when determining if payments are to be re-instated.

Awards for living costs are outside the scope of the fund and are not available from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances discretionary payments can be considered for costs which have been identified as a barrier to participating in learning. Applications for discretionary payments will be referred to a Review Panel for assessment.

Financial Hardship

Applications can be made where household income exceeds the guidelines and evidence of financial hardship can be demonstrated e.g. redundancy, bereavement, debt management. Supporting evidence will be necessary to fully assess an application and to determine the level of support available.

Childcare

If you need help with childcare costs whilst you study please contact Care to Learn on 0800 121 8989 or visit www.gov.uk/care-to-learn

Changes of Circumstances

Learners will be required to disclose any change of circumstances during the year which may affect their eligibility.

Appeals

If you do not agree with a decision and wish to appeal, please put in writing to The Student Finance Supervisor within 7 days of being informed of the assessment outcome. Appeals will be resolved within 21 working days.

Application Process

All applications are assessed on receipt of a correctly completed application form. Applicants must provide the income information and supporting evidence as detailed in the application form.

A decision on the application will be made within 14 working days from the date received.

Bursaries are awarded on a half termly basis and where possible are paid for directly e.g. meal credits, print credits, WUC mini bus.

Students must have their own bank account or provide a letter with third party details.

Assistance with payment of the WUC Outreach Mini-bus must be accompanied by a copy of the letter from the Local Authority stating that financial assistance has been declined.

Please note:

Applications for financial assistance are valid for one academic year only. Should you return to WUC in September 2021 and still require financial support, a new application form must be completed and up to date evidence provided.