

Bursary Funds Policy and Procedures 2024 - 2025

Policy number:	LS131	Policy Lead:	Registry Manager
Approved by:	SLT	Date Approved:	May 2024
Review Frequency:	Annually	Next Review Due:	May 2025
EIA Meeting Date (if EIA required):		External Website Appropriate:	Yes
SharePoint Location:	Policies and Procedures: Learner Services		
Linked Policies/College documents	Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedure		

Contents

Section	Policy	Page
1	Purpose of the Bursary Fund	2
2	Hardship Funds	3
3	Eligible Students	3
4	16 – 18 years	3
5	19 + years	5
6	Disbursement of Funds	7
7	Application Process	8
8	Assessment	8
9	Appeals and Complaints	8
10	Reduction or Cancellation of Payments	8
11	Change in Circumstances	9

1 Purpose of the Bursary Fund

The purpose of the Bursary Funds is to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

Bursary Funds are provided to institutions by the government's funding agencies in order that learning providers can provide financial help to students whose access to, or completion of, education might be inhibited by financial considerations.

The priority target group for discretionary funding are students who are economically or socially disadvantaged, who need support with transport, childcare or associated learning costs and are facing financial difficulty. Each application is treated on an individual basis.

Data concerning age, gender and disability is monitored and reported on a yearly basis to the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee. The data of all those who are successful in gaining support from the Bursary will be analysed annually to ensure that there is equal and fair access to the Bursary.

Bursary Funds are made from separate allocations (determined by different funding streams) by the government funding agencies to meet the general needs for students in the following categories:

Newbury College Discretionary Bursary for FE Students (all ages)

We can make discretionary bursary awards to help students with the cost of travel, to buy essential books, equipment or specialist clothing. These are items that a student would otherwise need to pay for to participate in the course.

Vulnerable Young Person's Bursary for FE Students (16 – 18 years only)

The Government define who is eligible under the vulnerable student groups, this is listed in the section below. The defined groups reflect that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

Childcare Funds for FE students – 20+ years only

Childcare support for students over the age of 20 can be made available. Parents aged 16-19 years can be considered through a separate scheme called Care to Learn.

Hardship Funds for FE Students

Where a student suffers exceptional circumstances, an application may be made for emergency support. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Free Meals – (16-18 Years, or over 19 but continuing a programme begun aged 16-18, or with an EHCP)

A free meal up to the value of the government subsidy (currently £2.53 per day) during term time will be available for students who are in receipt of, or have parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the eligible benefits. Those who do not fit into this criteria but are struggling, can contact information services to see if help can be provided.

Transport

Students receiving a bursary can receive support to purchase a bus or train pass.

Support for Industrial Placements (16 – 18 yrs on level 2 or level 3 study programmes)

Students who are undertaking a T level will be supported throughout their industrial placements, this is dependent on the identified placement. Further information will be provided by the Career Coach who is responsible for assisting with placements and the development work linked to this part of the T level offer.

Higher Education Bursary

Support is available for students enrolled on a Higher Education course, to purchase essential materials and equipment for their course. Eligibility is based upon financial need, and students in receipt of the benefits detailed in Section 3 will be prioritised.

Advanced Learning Loan Bursary

Support is available for students who have an Advanced Learning Loan. Applications can be made to support travel costs and the purchase of essential materials, kit and equipment for their course. Eligibility is based upon financial need and students in receipt of the benefits detailed in Section 3 will be prioritised

2 Hardship Funds

Hardship Funds

Where a student suffers exceptional circumstances, an application may be made for emergency support. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The student may be interviewed to ascertain the most appropriate support and will be expected, where appropriate, to engage with other relevant support agencies to determine a sustainable outcome and engagement with learning.

Applications for emergency hardship are not restricted to the beginning of the academic year but are subject to availability.

Where a student feels they have a financial barrier to learning not outlined above they may make an application to the fund. Funds will only be granted *where there is a clear need and a barrier to learning is determined*. These will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

In particular cases a student may have an interview with the Registry Manager to draw up a payment plan based on the individual student's needs and circumstances.

3 Eligible Students (Further Education and Higher Education)

Students are eligible to apply for Bursary Funds if they are an enrolled student with the College on a government funded course.

An eligible FE student must meet the residency eligibility criteria set out in Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding guidance. Please see link below:

[16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2024 to 2025 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year)

An eligible HE student must meet the nationality or residency criteria set out in the guidance on Student Finance. Please see link below:

[Student finance for undergraduates: Eligibility – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/student-finance-for-undergraduates-eligibility)

4 16 – 18 Years

The Newbury College Discretionary Bursary Fund

The College is committed to supporting students from low-income households. These students may apply for a bursary to contribute towards the cost of travel to and from College, uniform, course materials, trips

and print credit. The normal maximum award for a bursary will be £500 however the amount awarded is dependent upon specific financial need identified.

Applications for this bursary will be assessed and evidence will be required to support the application.

Support will be provided in the form of either a bus pass, payment towards train costs, uniform or essential equipment.

For courses lasting less than 30 weeks, the bursary will be pro-rata.

Course Costs

Materials essential for the course are provided by the College for 16 –18-year olds. Additional materials required by the student may be supported by the bursary, costs will be reimbursed only when receipts are submitted.

Free Meals

A free meal up to the value of the government subsidy (currently £2.53 per day) when at College during term time will be available for all students (aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2024) who are in receipt of, or have 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 guaranteed element of the 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 His Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after the recipient stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with household income less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits received)

Transport costs

- Students who receive a bursary can receive support to purchase a bus or train pass.
- Students may be required to provide proof of purchase of travel each month.
- Costs will be met when transport is used and, therefore, would not be paid for days when the student does not attend the College.

Vulnerable Young Person's Bursary

A bursary of up to £1,200 per academic year may be applied for by the following students aged 16 – 18 years (aged under 19 years on 31 Aug 2024):

- Students in care aged 16 – 17
- Students who are care leavers aged 16, 17 and 18
- Students aged 16, 17 and 18 in receipt of income support or universal credit
- Students aged 16, 17 and 18 who are in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments.

A bursary of more than £1,200 can be paid, if it is assessed that extra help is needed to remain in education. Any payments over £1,200 must be paid from the discretionary bursary allocation.

For courses lasting less than 30 weeks, the bursary will be pro-rata.

All eligible students applying for this bursary will be assessed and evidence will be obtained to support the application and assess the financial need.

- Awards may be calculated at a termly or monthly rate
- Payments are made in instalments – by BACS
- If a student is unable to attend the College for a period of time, payments may be paused until they are required again.
- Payments will only be made to a third party, for example to a parent/guardian/carer, in exceptional circumstances.

Childcare for 16 – 19 year olds

Students aged under 20 years at the start of their course may be supported by the Care to Learn Scheme. Application forms are available from the website:

www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn They cannot also be supported for childcare costs from the Bursary Funds.

Eligibility for Discretionary Bursary and Advanced Learning Loan Bursary

The bursary is available to students aged 16-18 years whose parent/guardian receives one or more of the following benefits or 19+ years students who receive one or more of the following benefits in their own name:

- 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 the 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 the recipient stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with household income less than £25,000 a year (after tax and not including any benefits received)

Please note that bursary funds are limited and the College cannot guarantee that funds will be provided to every student who meets the basic eligibility criteria. Bursary funds will be managed by the Registry Manager.

Payments to vulnerable students, over the £1,200 threshold will be paid from the Discretionary Bursary, as long as the applicant meets the eligibility criteria. The usual assessment process will be followed.

5 19+ years

The Advanced Learning Loan Bursary

Course materials and equipment

The bursary may support the cost of course materials and equipment which are required for the course.

Transport

19+ students may apply for a bursary to support transport costs to and from their place of study. This will be by bus or train via public transport routes. Students may be required to provide proof of purchase of travel each month.

A student cannot be supported with travel costs if they are already receiving travel or expenses through another agency.

Transport routes may encompass childcare providers or schools where this is deemed practical and removes a barrier to participation.

Childcare for 20+ year olds

The Bursary meets the separate needs of all students who are primary carers of a dependent child under 15 years (16 years for children with disabilities) and who satisfy general eligibility for Bursary funds. Priority is given to Lone Parents and their unwaged dependants.

Students over 19 may be supported by the Bursary for child care costs up to a maximum of £160 per week per child in line with Care to Learn. Any fees exceeding £160 per week for the academic year will need to be met by the student. The fees are for term time education and not through holidays. If a student is unable to attend the College for a period of time, payments may be paused until they are required again. The maximum amount to be paid for childcare per student will be £6000 per annum.

The following must be followed by the student who is applying for support with childcare costs:

- i. They use an OFSTED registered provider. Informal childcare (e.g. provided by a relative) cannot be included, even if charged for. If a family member is a registered child minder, then their fees can be paid
- ii. They apply and use all free childcare provision (Early Years Fund for 2 & 4 year olds and 2 year olds where applicable) to provide childcare for their timetabled course content in the first instance
- iii. They maximise the use of Working Tax Credit - Childcare element by the student or the other parent to fund additional hours over the free provision (see 2 above) before receiving the bursary childcare element
- iv. They do not have a partner, who is not seeking work, who is able to provide childcare.

Evidence will be required of the above and of a student's status and income as an individual or joint where living with a spouse or partner to support an application for childcare support.

Childcare funding will only be provided to support a student's timetable whilst they are attending regularly. Any costs incurred beyond these hours will be the responsibility of the student.

If the student does not meet satisfactory levels of attendance, then childcare payments may be withdrawn and be the responsibility of the student. The College will confirm details with the childcare provider and request a monthly invoice. The College will pay the childcare provider direct on a monthly basis – subject to attendance checks.

The College may support fees to hold a place over Christmas and Easter breaks and half-terms in order to facilitate continuity of education for both the student and child/ren.

Responsibility for a child's welfare and safety lies wholly with the student and not with the College. Payments are made for childcare with a registered child minder or OFSTED registered after school club/nursery as arranged by the student to support their timetable.

Free Meals

A free meal up to the value of the government subsidy (currently £2.53 per day) during term time will be available for students aged between 19 – 25 with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and 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 the 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 the recipient stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with household income less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits received)

Fees & Exams

In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the College a student may fall outside of the regular fee remission categories for full funding. This may occur where the student:

- is unable to claim state benefits, JSA (WRAG) or ESA
- is over the free entitlement age thresholds
- has level 2 or 3 which is classified as 'full' yet unable to undertake the suitable progression route due to funding, awarding body or age changes, particularly as a route to Higher Education or employment
- was previously entitled to fee remission but their circumstances have changed and they wish to complete the natural next stage of that qualification at that level.

In these situations, a student with a low income may apply for support with fees, exam costs and other accreditation costs linked to their course. Fee remission may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

For full fee remission details see - Newbury College Fee Guidance Notes.

The fee grant may cover all of the fees OR be used to cover the cost elements (e.g. exams, registration fees or professional membership fees).

The student MUST demonstrate how the funding will benefit their ability to access education, remain engaged in the learning setting and achieve the desired outcome.

This fund is limited and priority will be given to previously enrolled students who would be disadvantaged by being unable to continue a programme of study.

Students are not able to claim for the cost of exam re-sits.

6 Disbursement of Funds

- a. Bursary Funds are intended to provide appropriate financial support for students in individual cases where need and hardship is established.
- b. The student must be an enrolled student at the College.
- c. In the case of childcare it may be paid by BACS to the childcare provider directly. Cash payments may only be made to students under exceptional circumstances.
- d. The Fund will take into account the applicant's efforts to reduce expenditure by exploring other sources of support. For example:
 - i. Mandatory or discretionary awards
 - ii. Social Security benefits
 - iii. Payments through Career and Professional Development Loans and similar schemes

Applications should be submitted during the first half term. The application will be processed as quickly as possible but cannot be processed unless all supporting evidence is supplied.

7 Application Process

- Application forms for all categories and guidelines are available from Information Services or via the website. The College offers help and advice concerning the application process and form filling via Information Services. Students can be provided with any of the documents in an alternative format, by contacting Information Services.
- All the sections of the form must be completed, all documentary evidence must be attached as requested and the form sent to the Registry Manager. Do not send original documentation as the College cannot accept responsibility for them and are unable to return by recorded delivery.
- Applications are considered on the basis of need and will be processed as quickly as possible. As available funds are limited, applications will be prioritised according to the date they are received.
- Failure to provide all the required evidence will result in an application being delayed and may result in an award not being made.
- The Bursary Fund is limited and if it becomes exhausted and further students seek support, then a waiting list scheme will come into operation

8 Assessment

Assessment will be made using the evidence supplied by the student and supported by relevant documentation. Any changes to a student's circumstances MUST be declared to the College and a re-assessment may be carried out.

Whilst students may fulfil the eligibility conditions to apply for Bursary Funds, decisions are made according to individual need and will be prioritised according to the date they are received. If a student is unable to attend the College for a period of time, payments may be paused until they are required again.

If a student being supported with childcare costs is unable to attend the College for a period of time, payments may be paused until they are required again.

9 Appeals and Complaints

There is a formal appeals procedure for unsuccessful applicants. Please see Appeals Procedure and Complaints Policy for details.

Any complaints or queries relating to a bursary application must be submitted in writing before the end of the current academic year in which the application has been made. Complaints or queries relating to applications from previous years cannot be dealt with after this date.

10 Reduction or cancellation of support

The level of support will require re-assessment on a termly basis and possible withdrawal if:

- the student withdraws early from a course
- the student is suspended or excluded from College as a result of disciplinary action
- the student is absent from College for any reason for more than 3 weeks
- the student has been detained by a court order
- the student is found to have given incomplete/false information regarding personal circumstances

Any withdrawal of support will be notified in writing, giving guidance for appealing against the decision.

The College may require repayment of any amount overpaid for any reason.

11 Change in circumstances

Any student in receipt of financial support from the Bursary Funds must immediately inform the Registry Manager of any:

- change in permanent address
- change in own or parents' income or receipt of benefits during the course
- intention to change course or withdraw temporarily or permanently
- significant periods of illness or absence

Please Note

All awards are made at the discretion of the College, subject to appeal as outlined above. They are based on the available level of funding, individual circumstances and Government policies and advice. Government guidelines can change throughout the academic year, the College will review the funding levels and allocation mid-year to ensure students receive the appropriate amount of support. This may include a change to the eligibility criteria. Any relevant College procedures will be altered accordingly and could affect a student's eligibility / award at a later date. A copy of the College policy is available online.

Correct at time of printing

Date: May 2024

Review dates: April 2010/June 2011/March 2012/ April 2012 (minor amendment)

August 2013, April 2014, July 2014, June 2015, April 2016, June 2016, April 17, May 18, July 2019, July 2020, June 2022, June 2023

Next review: May 2025