

The logo for Exeter College, featuring a stylized blue arrow pointing upwards and to the right, positioned behind the text.

exeter college

# Bursary and Financial Support for Students Procedure

Written by: Welfare Manager

CLT Sponsor: Director of Student Services

Version: April 2024

A solid blue decorative wave shape at the bottom of the page, starting from the left and curving upwards towards the right.

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish the principles by which the bursary and financial support will be distributed for the following funds:

- 16-19 Bursary Fund (discretionary) inc. Free Meals
- 16-19 Bursary Fund (vulnerable)
- 19+ Learner Support Fund
- Adult Loans Bursary Fund
- Apprenticeship Care Leaver's Bursary

Financial support is designed to help students facing financial hardship overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

## 2. Eligibility

### General Criteria

In addition to the fund specific criteria detail below, students applying for financial support must meet the criteria set out by the relevant ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) guidance in terms of age, eligible education provision and residency. See 'Associated Documentation' section for the individual guidance documents.

### a) 16-19 Bursary Fund (discretionary)

This fund is discretionary and therefore is allocated in accordance with criteria set by the College and agreed at SLT on an annual basis. The aim is to support students from low income households and to help with the essential costs of participating in their study programme such as travel, essential kit and equipment, essential trips. The exact criteria is set each year and is detailed on the 16-19 Bursary Fund application form/online system and guidance notes. Discretionary bursary allocations are paid to the college in 2 parts: two-thirds in August, one-third in April calculated using the ESFA 2 element methodology.

### b) Free Meals

The ESFA guidance for Free meals in Further Education defines disadvantage as students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of certain welfare benefits. The allocation to support disadvantaged students with free meals is paid as above with the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary.

### c) 16-19 Bursary Fund (vulnerable)

Students who meet one of the criteria below (plus the above criteria for age, education provision and residency) and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary of up to £1,200 per year (only if on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more; a pro-rata amount is paid to students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks).

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner
- 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

**d) 19+ Learner Support Fund**

This fund is for students aged 19+ enrolled on a further education course and in financial hardship. The specific criteria is set annually by the college and is detailed on the 19+ application form/ online system and guidance notes. Assistance with childcare forms a key part of this fund and an additional application form collects details of this to ensure appropriate awards are made. Assistance can also be provided for travel and essential kit/ equipment.

**e) 19+ Loans Bursary Fund**

This fund is for students 19+ who have received approval of their Advanced Learner Loan (for the full fees for a Level 3 or above course) and need further financial support e.g. with childcare, travel, essential kit/ equipment.

**f) Apprenticeship Care Leaver's Bursary**

This is a single payment of £3000 (this amount was previously £1000, but for apprentices starting their apprenticeship on or after 1 August 2023, the bursary will be £3,000). It is payable to an eligible apprentice who is a care leaver, to help remove barriers to accessing the apprenticeship. The payment is made to the college and is passed onto the apprentice where they have remained on the apprenticeship for at least 60 days. The payment must be passed on within 30 days of the college receiving the payment.

### 3. Implementation

**a) Applying for financial support**

All students wishing to apply for financial support should complete the relevant application form either on paper or using the online system (16-19 Discretionary Bursary, Free Meals, 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary, 19+ Learner Support Fund and 19+ Loans Bursary Fund only) and provide evidence of eligibility as requested.

Financial support applications are assessed individually using the set eligibility criteria (decided annually for 16-19 Discretionary Bursary, Free Meals, 19+ Learner Support Fund and 19+ Loans Bursary Fund) and ESFA guidance document specific to each fund.

Financial support awards for the following funds are dependent on funding the college receives. Funds are limited and financial support may not be offered in all circumstances. The college has the right to close the application process due to insufficient funds.

- 16-19 Bursary Fund (discretionary) inc. Free Meals
- 19+ Learner Support Fund
- 19+ Loans Bursary Fund

**b) Administration and allocation of the funds to a student**

Student and Next of Kin are notified of the amount and type of award made via email. Payment is made either in kind, via BACS, cash or transfer to a college faculty or department. If a payment is to be made via BACS, the student's bank details are requested on a form which is uploaded to the college's finance system.

In line with ESFA guidance, the College may use up to 5% of the 16-19 Bursary fund allocation on administrative costs.

Receipt of financial support awards is conditional on student's adherence to the Code of Conduct. Failure to meet the conditions of attendance, behaviour and punctuality could result in an award being withdrawn. The College reserves the right to withdraw funding at any point.

### **c) Appeal**

If a student wishes to appeal against any decision relating to financial support, then the appeals procedure below should be followed:

- appeal in writing to the Director of Student Services within 7 days of being notified of the award
- a response will be provided within 7 days

If a student wishes to make a complaint relating to financial support, the College complaints procedure should be followed.

### **d) Associated Documentation**

- a. ESFA 16-19 Bursary Fund guidance
- b. ESFA Free meals in Further Education guidance
- c. ESFA Adult Education Budget Funding Rules
- d. ESFA Advanced Learner Loans Funding Rules
- e. ESFA Apprenticeship Funding Rules