

19+ LEARNER SUPPORT FUND BURSARY POLICY DOCUMENT 2023-2024

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1. Introduction

The Learner Support Fund Bursary Scheme and the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Scheme exist to help students continue with and complete their course where they would otherwise be unable to do so on financial grounds. The amount granted to students should make a significant impact on them coming to College or being able to remain on their course.

For students aged 19 and over the following bursaries are available:

- 19+ Hardship Fund (LSF)
- Advanced Learner Loan Fund
- 20+ Childcare Fund

The details in this policy document follow the guidelines given to the College by our funding agency, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

There is no entitlement to receive a bursary even if a student meets all the eligibility criteria. If the student does not have any additional costs associated with coming to College or if there are no funds available, no further bursaries will be given.

2. Who Can Apply for the Learner Support Fund

2.1. Criteria All Students Must Meet

The student must:

- Be enrolled on an ESFA-funded course at Bradford College (excluding courses in the Community Section of the prospectus)
- Aged 19 or over on 31 August 2023. There are some exceptions to this and these students will be funded through the 16-19 Learner Support Fund Bursary
- Need financial support to enable them to be able to afford to come to College
- Meet the income requirement which is having a gross household income of £30,000 or less
- Be fully engaged with their learning activities – this includes attending their classes/placements regularly and undertaking any online learning activities set for them (see Section 5)
- Students must meet the residence requirement. Information about this will be gathered at enrolment. There are exceptions for Asylum Seekers

In addition, students must meet **one** of the following:

- Be studying up to and including a Level 2 course
- Be aged 19 to 23, studying a Level 3 course, and be receiving full tuition fee remission under ESFA regulation

- Be aged 19 or over, studying a Level 3 or Level 4 course, and receive the Advanced Learner Loan

The student must **not**:

- Be eligible to receive financial support from other funds e.g. waged apprenticeships, work-based learning
- Be on day release from prison or released on a temporary license
- Be studying a Higher Education course. Bradford College has other funds that students on Higher Education courses can apply to

2.1.1. Household Income

Students will meet the income requirement if they receive of:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit Guarantee

This includes joint claims with their partner if they are named on the award letter.

For other students, their household income will be calculated. We take all the following income into account for the relevant people within the household:

- Wages/ earned income
- Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Any Employment and Support Allowance that is not income-related
- Working Tax Credits
- Universal Credit payments
- Carers Allowance
- Unearned income such as rent being paid to the student/partner or their guardian(s)

We do not count:

- Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments
- Child Tax Credits or Child Benefit
- Childcare element of Working Tax Credits
- Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit
- Universal Credit payments made in replacement of any of the above

If a student can demonstrate that they do not have an income (either on their own or with their partner) they can apply to the Learner Support Fund if they have sufficient savings to support themselves during the year.

If a student has no means of support they will not be eligible for the Learner Support Fund.

2.1.2. Whose Income Will Be Assessed

Financially independent students who do not have a partner

The income of the student is the income that will be assessed. To be classed as financially independent the student must have an income of £5,000 or more and be responsible for paying household bills or reasonable board payments.

Students who have a partner

The income of both the student and their partner will be assessed.

Students who are not financially independent (students aged 19 to 24 studying full-time)

The people whose income will be assessed will depend on who is in the household for example:

- If a student lives with parent(s)/carer(s), the income of parent(s)/carer(s) will be assessed
- If a student lives with both parents/carers and their grandparents, it is the income of both parents that will be assessed. The grandparents' income will not be included
- If a student lives with their parent and partner (who is not the student's parent) it is the income of both the parent and their partner that will be assessed

2.2. Criteria for Childcare Support

As well as meeting the conditions in Section 2.1 students must also be:

- Using officially registered childcare provision
- Be the primary carer for the child/children who need childcare
- Using any free Early Education/Childcare Funding (paid by the Government) for the time they are in classes

In addition, students must not:

- Be aged 19 at the start of the course. Students who are aged 19 should apply to Care to Learn for their childcare costs. The application process can be found on the Care to Learn website
- Have a partner at home who can look after the child/children
Receive the Childcare element of Working Tax Credits or Universal Credit for the time they are in College

2.3. Asylum Seekers

To be eligible for funding from the Learner Support Fund students must receive NASS funding or be dependent on someone in receipt of NASS funding.

3. How to Apply

To apply for the Learner Support Fund, students will need to visit the Student Funding Office in the David Hockney building or the Student Services Office at Trinity Green.

3.1. Application in Person

If you require support to complete your application, a member of the Student Funding team will be able to provide support and advice at the time of application.

All supporting documents must be provided at the time of application.

Where insufficient evidence is provided, the student will be advised they have additional things to provide. An application will not be accepted until all documents have been received.

4. How Learner Support Fund Applications Are Processed

Applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. All applications will be dated when they are complete.

When a decision has been made an award notification will be provided in an email sent directly to your college email address

5. Attendance/Course Changes and Withdrawals

5.1. Normal Levels of Participation/Attendance

Students are expected to engage in all learning activities that are set for them. This includes but is not limited to attending classes and placements, participating in online activities, and completing any home studies set. Participation will be carefully monitored. Students whose participation is below the required level will have their payments reviewed.

Any unauthorised absences (which include sickness) will lower a student's actual attendance. Authorised absences do not lower a student's actual attendance. Students are expected to report any absence in line with Bradford College's attendance policy.

5.2. Special Circumstances

Flexibility will be given to students with medical conditions and/or other special circumstances that are disclosed to Student Funding. However, all students must attend/participate at a level that will enable them to complete their course.

Where a student is working with an advisor or member of staff to improve their attendance/participation their previous record can be ignored and their attendance/participation monitored from a specific date.

Where a student has signed an attendance/participation agreement with Student Funding/the College.

5.3. Suspensions

If a student has been suspended from College pending disciplinary action one of these options will be applied to their attendance:

- If, when investigated, the outcome of the disciplinary procedures is that there is no case to answer, the time the student is absent will not affect their overall level of attendance
- If, when investigated, the outcome of the disciplinary procedures is that there is a case to answer, any suspension will count towards their attendance calculations

5.4. Transfers

When a student transfers to another course, their level of attendance will be judged only on their new course. Where a student transfers to another course they may not automatically qualify for another course materials payment.

6. What Financial Support is Available

All applications are assessed individually and how much a student can receive depends on personal circumstances.

The assessment that is completed will be based on the courses the student is enrolled on at the time they apply to the fund. If they enrol on additional courses after this, it is their responsibility to notify Student Funding so they can be re-assessed.

Every care is made to ensure each student receives the correct assessment. However, if an error is made in assessing a student's grant and too much is awarded to the student, the College reserves the right to amend the award and, if already paid, ask for the money to be repaid. If additional funds need to be awarded this will be amended so the student receives the correct amount.

Below are the guidelines used to decide what help is available for each student.

6.1. Course-Related Costs

The maximum initial grant available for course-related costs depends on the duration of the student's course:

Full-time students – full-year	£125
Part-time students – full-year	£75
Part-time students – part-year	£50

The figures given are not for each part-time course, but for all part-time courses being studied. Therefore, initially, a student studying 1 GCSE will be eligible for the same maximum payment as a student studying 3 GCSEs.

Where students are on courses that have very low or no course costs students may be awarded less than the maximum amounts shown.

Where a student is funded by tuition fee remission or the Advanced Learner Loan non-essential equipment/materials will be considered to enhance a student's chances of passing their course or improving their grades.

6.2. Travel Costs

Where a student lives more than half a mile from their place of study they will be considered for help with travel costs.

Where there are medical or other reasons why a student cannot walk half a mile and third-party evidence is provided about this, consideration will be given to giving help with travel costs.

The following help is available:

Students in College 1 or 2 days per week:

Payment equivalent to the cost of daily tickets

Students in College 3 or more days per week:

Payments equivalent to the cost of First Termly/Monthly Student Bus passes

If funds are still available (usually in March / April), additional payments can be made based on a student's actual costs – providing the student is travelling by the cheapest reasonable method of travel.

6.3. Taxi Fares

If a student must use taxis because:

They have an injury which means they cannot use public transport: Amount

Payable: Full cost of taxi up to a maximum of £750

They have a disability and cannot access public transport and are not entitled to transport or funding (e.g. mobility element of Disability Living Allowance) for transport through another means:

The amount payable: Up to 50% of the actual costs, a maximum of £1,000 per year

It will be the student's responsibility to notify Student Funding that they fall into one of these categories and to provide appropriate supporting information.

At least one taxi receipt will be requested to confirm the cost of the journey. If possible, this should also be done in emergencies, but this must not delay support being given.

6.4. Tuition / Examination Fees

Eligible students will receive 50% of their tuition fees and 100% of their examination fees.

The maximum payable for tuition fees is: **£1,102**

6.5. Childcare Costs

Students will receive childcare support for the number of days they have to attend College classes, any compulsory non-paid placements, and any other essential learning activities they cannot do with their child/children present.

Where children are eligible for Early Education/Childcare Funding, this must be used for the time the student is engaged in essential learning activities.

Maximum payable:

1 Child	£50 per day
2 or more children	£100 per day

No individual child will receive more than £50 per day. If the maximum levels set do not cover the full childcare costs the student will need to pay the additional costs.

The amounts that the Learner Support Fund will pay do not include payment for meals whilst in childcare. It is the student's responsibility to pay for their children's meals.

If a childcare provider charges during school holidays – regardless of whether the child attends the nursery, the Learner Support Fund will pay over the following College holidays: Half-term holidays, Christmas, and Easter holidays.

6.6. Meals Whilst at College

In exceptional cases, students may be put on a Meals Scheme. This is usually a result of a referral from an appropriate member of staff within the College.

6.7. Asylum Seekers

Travel

Students who are Asylum Seekers will receive travel support if they are unable to provide a bank account as follows:

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Where a student lives more than half a mile from their place of study they will be given bus passes. The following passes will be issued:

Students in College 1 day per week:

First/Arriva daily tickets

Students in College 2 or more days per week:

First termly/monthly student bus passes

Childcare

The normal rules for childcare will be applied except that there is no provision to pay the student if the childcare provider does not register with the College.

7. Payments of the Learner Support Fund

7.1. Payment of Travel, Books, and Course Materials

Payments for books and materials and, when bus passes are not provided will be made by BACs into the student's bank account. Where a student is unable to have a bank account and a Power of Attorney is in place for the student, payment can be made to a third party.

7.2. Payment of Tuition/Exam Fees

Where payments are due for tuition/exam fees, these will be paid to the College unless the College Finance Office confirms that all fees have been paid. In this case, payment will be paid into the student's bank account.

7.3. Payment of Childcare Costs

Childcare payments will normally be made in advance to the childcare provider. Childcare providers must register with the College by accepting the terms and conditions for childcare payments from the Learner Support Fund. They also need to provide their OFSTED (or other appropriate) registration and bank details.

Where a childcare provider is unwilling to register, the College reserves the right not to give childcare support. In rare circumstances, childcare payments will be made to the student. In this situation, payments will be made in arrears and the student will need to prove they have paid their childcare provider.

Payments will be made in blocks, covering several weeks. Attendance will be checked before each payment is made. A payment schedule will be provided to both the parent and childcare provider.

Complete applications received by Student Funding before the October half-term or within 4 weeks of a student's start date will be backdated to the beginning of the course or the date when childcare started.

Applications received after this will only be backdated to the beginning of the week in which they are received. If funds are available later in the year, childcare might be backdated to the beginning of the course.

If a student leaves a childcare provider and starts using a different provider, there will be no overlap in payment. If a student does not want to leave at the end of a specific payment period, they will have to pay any difference in funding themselves.

Childcare payments will end when the student's study finishes (usually at the end of June). If funds are still available childcare may be paid to students who use registered childcare over the summer period. This is providing:

- The student is returning to study at Bradford College in September, the course can be either FE or HE, but must show progression, i.e. be a level or year higher
- The childcare provider charges to keep the place available
- The student's child does not reach school age by September
- The student continues to use the same childcare

8. **Discretion in Special Circumstances**

In the majority of cases, the 19+ Learner Support Fund Bursary Policy Document 2023-2024 will be followed. However, it is recognised that special circumstances may arise that cannot be written into policy. Therefore, the Student Funding Team Leader has the discretion to respond on an individual basis, if it is felt that there is a genuine need. This is to ensure that a student can start or be able to continue their course.

9. **Appeals / Complaints Procedure – All Funds**

Appeals can be made if a student feels this policy document has not been followed and this has resulted in them not being given a bursary, or not receiving as much as the policy document states they should.

Appeals must be made within 10 working days of the date on their decision letter and must be in writing, clearly stating the grounds of the appeal. Appeals should be addressed to:

Student Funding Team Leader and emailed to studentfunding@bradfordcollege.ac.uk.

A decision will be sent in writing and the decision will be final.

If a student's situation changes during the academic year, there is no need to submit an appeal. They should contact Student Funding so any new evidence can be considered.

10. **Fraud – All Funds**

Where there is evidence of fraud, the evidence will be reviewed and, if fraud is confirmed, this will result in:

- The loss of all future payments OR
- The loss of some payments not already made OR
- The student being asked to repay all funding received and the loss of all future payments OR
- Disciplinary action

In certain circumstances, the College may have a duty to pursue fraud as a criminal matter.

