



The Collegiate Trust
Exceptional Education for All

TCT Bursary Policy

Lead

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The Collegiate Trust Post 16 Bursary Policy

Introduction

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
- discretionary bursaries

Aims of the Bursary

Both types of bursary funding are to help eligible students with essential costs of participating such as travel to and from school or college or to buy essential books, equipment, or specialist clothing that are required for their individual study programme. These are items a student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

Eligibility

To be eligible for either type of bursary students must:

- Be aged over 16 and under 19. The only exceptions for the discretionary bursary are students aged 19 and who are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or students aged 19 or over who have an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan.
- Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.
- Students must meet the residency criteria in [DfE funding rules](#) for post-16 provision.
- Be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted).
- Accompanied asylum seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)
Generally, asylum seekers are not entitled to public funds. Accompanied asylum seeking children (i.e. Those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. If they are destitute they can apply to the Home Office for suitable housing and cash for essentials, but they are not eligible for other income.
- As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application refused, institutions can provide in kind student support such as course related books, equipment or a travel pass. Under no circumstances should an institution give cash to any asylum seeker who is not an unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC).
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children:
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children do not receive cash support from the Home Office and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a vulnerable bursary ('in care' group).
When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, institutions must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour the local authority must provide them with the same support and services as they do care leavers. As such, they will continue to be eligible for a vulnerable bursary until they reach the upper age limit.
Where an asylum claim is not supported, the individual may not be able to stay legally in the UK. When asylum claims have been fully heard and the appeals rights exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds. There are a few exceptions where the withdrawal of support would be seen as a breach of human rights.

Vulnerable Students Bursary

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined vulnerable groups are:

- Young people in care

- Young care leavers
- receiving Income Support (IS), or Universal Credit (UC) 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 (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

Students must be funded to reflect the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the actual participation needs and costs they have.

The bursary for vulnerable groups can pay up to £1,200 per year to a student participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more if they have costs that mean they need that amount of support. Students must only receive the amount they actually need to participate, and the school must not automatically award students £1,200, but must provide funding based on actual costs. Equally, schools can provide support to a vulnerable group student of more than £1,200 if you assess they need extra help to remain in education. Any payments over £1,200 must be paid from the discretionary bursary allocation or from the school's own funds.

Discretionary Bursary

Decisions about which students receive a bursary and how much bursary they receive will be based on each student's individual circumstances and actual need. These will vary from student to student, depending on their household income and their actual costs. Schools will set a household income threshold that will be reviewed each year to decide eligibility for funds. The school can decide to use household income in conjunction with other factors, such as distance to travel from the institution and the number of dependent children in the household, as well as the actual participation needs the student has.

There is no statutory entitlement to a discretionary bursary. The rate will be set in proportion to the funds available and the number of eligible students. If circumstances change through the year which mean that a student is no longer eligible for compensation, the bursary may be withdrawn. If a student drops out of learning, payments will stop.

There will be a limited amount of money in the budget which will be used as an emergency fund to support students and this will be assessed on a case by case basis. Requests for this support must be made to the relevant member of the sixth form team.

Application process and Evidence

All students who are eligible can apply for bursary through filling in an application form and passing on to the relevant member of the sixth form team, in which they will submit bank details and indicate household income, as well as outline any costs they incur for travel, books or other expenses as outlined at the top of this document.

The students must then provide official documentation to as evidence that they meet the criteria for either bursary which could include:

- Household income (preferably P60)
- Income support
- Job seekers' allowance
- Universal credit

The defined vulnerable group bursary is not subject to household income assessment, in the same way as the discretionary bursary, because eligibility is based on the student being in one of the defined groups.

The sixth form team will then assess the application and evidence provided for suitability for bursary.

All applications will be reviewed annually at the start of each academic year. Schools can exercise discretion as to whether you carry out household income checks annually for the discretionary bursary or just once at the beginning of a student's study programme. If schools decide not to conduct annual checks of household income eligibility for the discretionary bursary, you must ensure you obtain a signed and dated (hard copy or electronic) self-declaration form from the student to confirm that their household circumstances have not changed.

In year applications will be considered subject to funds available but cannot be backdated.

Evidence of eligibility for vulnerable student bursary

Schools will need to obtain proof that students are eligible (such as proof that they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups). Schools will ask for, and retain copies for audit purposes of, evidence from the student. For example:

- obtain proof that students meet the criteria for the bursary are in receipt of the specified benefits in their own name or that they fully meet the definitions for in care/care leavers.
- For students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority – this is the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority.
- For students in receipt of UC or IS, a copy of their UC or IS award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the student's name/confirm they are entitled to the benefits in their own right. The evidence must not state any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education or training. For students in receipt of UC, you must also see a document such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills and so on.

Conditions

Payment of a bursary will be conditional on the student meeting agreed standards of attendance, behaviour and completion of work. Medical absences are acceptable, if properly supported by documentary evidence. Students will be expected to:

- Achieve an attendance figure of 92%
- Be punctual to all lessons
- Meet the deadlines set for homework and coursework
- Make acceptable progress towards academic targets being made, as evidenced in reports.

If a recipient of a bursary does not meet these requirements, payment may be discontinued.

The bursary fund cannot be used to:

- provide learning support – services that institutions give to students. Examples include counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring or support such as servicing laptops/tablets
- support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme goals and course objectives
- support the costs of foreign/overseas field trips where the content can be found within England at a much cheaper cost and/or to support the costs of fields trips that are not an essential part of a student's study programme goals or course objectives. Learning activities and experiences must be clearly mapped to show the link between the activity and the student's study programme goals or course objectives
- support general household incomes/general living costs (rent, bills, wi-fi and so on).

Payments

Payments for both defined vulnerable group and discretionary bursary funding should be made to students in-kind rather than cash as far as possible. This helps ensure that the bursary is spent for the reasons it was awarded. In-kind payments can include travel passes, vouchers or credits for meals, required books and required equipment. When schools make bursary fund payments to students rather than providing support in-kind, it is good practice to pay the funding by BACS transfer to the student's own bank account. Schools must not make large or lump sum bursary payments to students.

Schools must not make blanket or flat rate/fixed rate payments that do not reflect students' actual costs and needs.

Receipts for expenditure and purchases made with bursary funding form part of the audit and assurance of the scheme. Receipts are evidence that funding is being used for the reasons it was awarded. For standard weekly costs like travel and food, it may not be practical to collect receipts for every transaction, so costs can be evidenced initially by receipts then paid after that linked to attendance patterns.

Availability of Funds

Bursary money is finite. As such, it may not meet all needs or be available for all discretionary payments at all parts of the year.

A student awarded a bursary will sign an agreement undertaking to meet the conditions laid out by the school, accepting the amount and basis which it is to be paid, and undertaking to notify the Collegiate of any change in his/her circumstances.

Confidentiality

Please note that The Collegiate Trust guarantees that all personal information including household earnings will be stored securely and will remain strictly confidential

Fraudulent claims

Where an application is found to have been made on the basis of false information, payment will be discontinued. The individual concerned may be subject to disciplinary action and The Collegiate Trust may seek to recover any funds or goods obtained.

Checklist for school use.

| Section | Item | Completed? |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Eligibility: All Bursaries | Student meets the age criteria. | |
| Eligibility: All Bursaries | Eligible education provision. | |
| Eligibility: All Bursaries | Student meets the residency criteria for post-16 provision. | |
| Eligibility: All Bursaries | Evidence of eligibility has been retained. | |
| Bursary for defined vulnerable groups | Student falls within one of the defined vulnerable groups for example, in receipt of the specified benefits in their own right or in care/care leaver. | |
| Bursary for defined vulnerable groups | Financial needs assessment carried out to confirm financial need and actual costs they have. No student should automatically receive £1,200. | |
| Bursary for defined vulnerable groups | Appropriate evidence seen and copies retained to confirm student's eligibility, including the letter to support in care. | |
| Bursary for defined vulnerable groups | Support awarded in kind (bus pass, meal vouchers, books or equipment purchased on student's behalf). Receipts should be retained. | |
| Bursary for defined vulnerable groups | Letter issued to student confirming the amount of support, what support will be made in-kind and payment conditions. | |

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| Discretionary bursary | Evidence to confirm the student meets the institution's bursary fund criteria, including household income and statement of actual participation costs. | |
| Discretionary bursary | Evidence of income and overall eligibility obtained, and copies retained. | |
| Discretionary bursary | Assessment of student's actual financial needs carried out. Block, blanket or flat rate payments are not permitted – the financial support from bursary funds should reflect the actual costs the student has. | |
| Discretionary bursary | Support awarded in kind (bus pass, meal vouchers, books or equipment purchased on student's behalf). Receipts should be retained. | |
| Discretionary bursary | Letter issued to student confirming the amount of support, what support will be made in-kind and payment conditions. | |