



University Technical College Warrington (UTCW)

Post 16 Bursary Policy and Application Process

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Policy Summary

1 Background

This policy is in line with the ESFA 16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2022/23.

The bursary is made up of two parts: A bursary for defined vulnerable young people and a discretionary fund for schools, academies and colleges to distribute. Both types are intended to assist students in participating in their college place.

Each institution can set its own eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursaries and the terms and conditions under which they are awarded.

- The college will retain 5% of their allocation from the ESFA for administration
- It is recommended that the college retains 30% of the allocation for 'in-year applications'
- The college should ensure that they retain a small emergency fund for exceptional circumstances
- The monies allocated to the 16-19 Bursary cost centre are ring-fenced and any underspend must be rolled into the following year

The 16-19 Bursary is designed to help support those people who 'face the greatest barriers to continuing in education and training post-16' (1). Applications can be made throughout the academic year as students' financial or home situations change. The Bursary has two elements which will be termed as part of this Policy as 'Full Bursary' (vulnerable bursary) 'Eligible to Apply' (discretionary bursary).

Appendix 2(Guidance for Students) details the eligibility criteria and FAQs.

To be eligible to apply and receive a discretionary bursary, a student must be under 19 on 31 August in the academic year they start their course. Where a young person turns 19 during their year of study they can continue to be supported until the end of the academic year or end of the course, whichever is the sooner. Young people must also satisfy the residency criteria in the ESFA funding Guidance for 2013-14.

Full Bursary is automatically made available to the students in one of the categories below:

- Young people in care
- Care leavers (ESFA class 'care leavers' as young people aged 18-21 who have been looked after for more than 13 weeks or since the age of 14; or young people who cease to be looked after or accommodated)
- Students claiming Income Support or Universal Credit (in their own name)
- Disabled students receiving both Employment Support and Disability Living Allowance or PIP

All the students listed above are automatically allocated a bursary by the ESFA, the amount of bursary received will be paid in accordance to a review of finance need and amount of support required.

Eligibility under the Full Bursary will be verified using the following documents which must be copied and retained for ESFA audit purposes:

- A letter from the Local Authority confirming care or leaving care arrangements.
 - Claiming Receipt for both Disability Allowance or PIP and Employment Support Allowance: a letter setting out the benefit to which a young person is entitled, confirming that the terms of the benefit allow them to take part in further education – see appendix
 - Claiming receipt for income support /Universal Credit (paid to them not their parents).
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The eligibility criteria to **make an application** for an 'Eligible to Apply' bursary are:

- A household income of below £25,000 (this includes Universal Credit)
- A student currently entitled to Free School Meals, or
- A student whose parents are currently claiming other means-tested benefits including Income Support, Working Tax Credit/ Child Tax Credit, Income Based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), who is not entitled to free school meal
- At the decision of the Principal, any student who does not fall under the categories listed above, but consider themselves to be in financial hardship
- Students who are young carers and are not in receipt of a carer's allowance

Eligibility under the 'Eligible to Apply' Bursary will be verified using any of the following documents which must be copied and retained for audit purposes in a secure place:

- An Income Support award letter which is less than 3 months old at the date of application.
- All pages of a recent Tax Credit Award
- 3 months of universal Credit Award letters
- An ESA award letter which is less than 3 months old at the date of application.
- A pensions/ benefits award letter which is less than 3 months old.
- 3 months of wage slips
- Self-employment audited accounts or an official tax return.

Please see the Bursary application form in the appendices.

An appeals panel will sit to consider the case of any student who wishes to challenge the decision not to award a bursary and any complaints will be processed through the College Complaints Procedures.

All students must have their own bank account to receive an award and all payments made directly to the student will be made via BACS whether it is a stand-alone payment or a regular instalments.

2. The Application Process

Students can submit an application at any point during the academic year as their financial/home situation dictates but payments will not usually be back-dated. However, their application will be subject to a review of their attendance and behaviour at the end of each half term. As is college policy, a student starts a 'clean slate' at the start of each half term and a bursary payment will be paid subject to their meeting the terms and conditions in the 16-19 Bursary Contract in that half term.

Students/parents could also have submitted an application to the Local Authority and been awarded Free School Meals before they submit their application; the college can have this verified by the LA as a means of assessing household income.

The Principal will review each application and following this, a recommendation will be made regarding each application and a confirmation letter including conditions will be sent.

The Finance Department will pay agreed amounts to applicants each half term once evidence of proof of purchase is provided. All payments will be countersigned by the Principal.

All students are expected to make the college aware of any change in financial/home situations as they arise. Parents/students are required to sign to this effect in the Bursary Contract and if upon review it is found that individuals have falsified documents, submitted inaccurate information or been claiming money fraudulently, the Academy will refer the matter to the police.

The application process is supported by the 'Appeals Process' and the 'College Complaints Procedures'.

3 The Appeals Process

All students have the right to appeal the decision and must submit a letter to the Principal within two-weeks of receiving their decision letter. All decisions regarding appeals will be communicated within a week of the Appeals Panel meeting and this decision will be final. However, this should not stop a student submitting a further application should they feel they have sufficient change in circumstances.

4 Academy Complaints Procedures

Should a student/parent wish to make a formal complaint regarding the 16-19 Bursary Application and Decision Process, they should follow the UTCW Complaints Procedure.

5 Application of the 16-19 Bursary Funding

The Bursary Contract clearly states that there 'is an expectation that a student will spend their Bursary to support their education and this could cover such outgoings as transport costs, books and equipment, trips and other course related costs'. Students may require the money to pay for food but for those in receipt of Free School Meals this in itself will be the support under that category.

6 16-19 Bursary Conditions

Payments will only be made if students have good attendance (over 95%) and a good attitude to learning and others. It is the decision of the Principal as to whether this criteria has been met.

Discretion around attendance may be applied in exceptional circumstances.

Should a student fail to meet the conditions of their Bursary contract, they will lose some or all of their payment on a pro-rata basis.

16-19 Bursary - Guidance for Students

In order to ascertain whether you are eligible for a 16-19 Bursary you should follow the guidance below.

'Full Bursary'

If the answer to any of these questions is 'YES' you are '**automatically eligible**' to receive a 16-19 Bursary.

- Young people in care or care leavers (ESFA class 'care leavers' as young people aged 18-21 who have been looked after for more than 13 weeks or since the age of 14; or young people who cease to be looked after or accommodated).
- Students claiming Income Support or Universal Credit (in their own name).
- Disabled students receiving both Employment Support and Disability Living Allowance or PIP.

'Eligible to Apply Bursary'

If the answer to any of these questions is 'YES' you are **eligible to apply** for a 'Discretionary Bursary'.

- A household income of below £25,000 (including Universal Credit)
- A student currently entitled to Free School Meals
- A student whose parents are currently claiming other means-tested benefits including Income Support, Working Tax Credit/ Child Tax Credit, Income Based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), who is not entitled to free school meals.
- At the decision of the Principal, any student who does not fall under the categories listed above, but considers themselves to be in financial hardship.

Other important information to understand:

- You must be **under 19 on the 31st August** in the academic year you start your course to be eligible for a Bursary.
- If you **turn 19 during your programme of study** and are 'automatically eligible' for a Full Bursary or are successful in applying for an 'Eligible to Apply Bursary' you will be supported until the end of the academic year or until your course ends whichever is the sooner date.

Post 16 Bursary Application Form

All the information on this form will be used in the strictest confidence. An unsuccessful application for a 16-19 Bursary does not affect your place to study at UTC Warrington

Name: _____

DOB: _____

Contact no: _____

Date of application: _____

Section 1: Please now complete the following administrative questions:

State which school/college you are transferring from: _____

Section 2: Assessing Eligibility – Stage 1.

Which of the criteria below makes you eligible for a 16-19 Bursary? Please tick only one box:

‘Automatically Eligible’

- I am in care
- I am a care leaver
- I am a student who is receiving income support
- I am registered disabled and in receipt of both ‘Employment Support Allowance, & ‘Disability Living Allowance’.

‘Eligible to Apply’

- I have successfully applied for and receive free school meals (which will be verified by the Local Authority).

If you are making an application under the ‘Eligible to Apply’ please state which benefits your parents are in receipt of. Your FSM status will be checked with the Local Authority.

- Income Support
 - The guarantee element of the State Pension Credit
 - Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Support under Part VI of the immigration & Asylum Act
 - Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Work Tax Credit and have an annual income that does not exceed £25, 000).
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Section 3 – Assessing Eligibility – Stage 2

If you have ticked a box in the 'eligible to apply' category please explain why you believe you meet the eligibility criteria and how you would use the 16-19 Bursary to support your education post 16. Please be as specific as you can and give supporting evidence where possible:

Please continue overleaf if you need more space to complete your statement of eligibility.

Assessing Eligibility – Stage 3 – Verification

Please state clearly what supporting documentation you are submitting as part of your application. Students who have ticked a box in the 'Automatically Eligible' section should submit appropriate evidence to verify their status. See list below:

- Written confirmation from the Local Authority that you are currently in care or previously were in care.
- A letter setting out the benefits you are in receipt of on headed note paper from the Benefits Office.
- Copy of 'Employment Support Allowance, & 'Disability Living Allowance'.

All documentation should be originals unless verified by the Sixth Form Team who will take a photo copy and sign as part of the verification process.

Any change in financial/home situation should be communicated to the College in writing. Parents/ students are required to sign to this effect in the Bursary Contract and if upon review it is found that individuals have falsified documents, submitted inaccurate information or been claiming money fraudulently the College will refer the matter to the police.

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Carer signature: _____ Date: _____

UTC Warrington - Post 16 Bursary Claim Form (to be completed each half term)

Name of Student	Approved	Signed by LM
Details of Receipts to be reimbursed/orders to be made by Finance		£
		Total amount

Signed by student	Date
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