

Student Services

16-18 Bursary Policy 2016/17

Introduction

1. This policy sets out the financial support available through, and eligibility for, bursary funding for 16-18 year old students attending all campuses of Bedford College, including the Bedford campus, Shuttleworth College and the Bedford Sixth Form.
2. It is the policy of the College to optimise the use of 16-18 Bursary funding to provide support to those young people facing the greatest financial barriers to continuing in education.

Context

3. Free meals for post 16 students in FE were introduced in 2014-15. Meals to the value of £2.41 per day were to be made available for eligible students in receipt (themselves or their parent/guardian) of specified qualifying benefits, plus students aged 19 to 24 subject to a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan).
4. In 2016-17 the College has been given greater flexibility to vary the amount per meal and extend the meals bursary to other students we assess as being in hardship.
5. Local authorities have a duty to publish their policies in respect of their arrangements for student transport and may provide support for students under 19 at the start of their course, often in the form of free or subsidised travel, subject to the following conditions:
 - Student lives over 3 miles from college
 - Student attends nearest college/school which offers their chosen course.
6. Local authority support for surrounding authorities has reduced year on year.
7. The College therefore chooses to award a travel bursary which makes a contribution to travel costs for those students receiving no local authority support. For students starting at College from September 2016, the £450 travel bursary will be means-tested, and available to students with a household income of £30,000 or less.

8. Different arrangements apply for Shuttleworth students travelling on College buses, where there is a system of discounted bus passes. For students with a household income of £30,000 or less the student contribution to the cost of the bus pass is £405 per year (£150 per term). For students with a household income of £30,001 or more the cost is £640 per year (£225 per term). Students choosing to travel to Shuttleworth by alternative means may apply for the travel bursary of £450, where the household income is £30,000 or less.
9. The bursary will be offered in the following strands:
- Travel bursary
 - Course costs bursary
 - Vulnerable learner bursary (not discretionary)
 - Discretionary hardship bursary
 - Meals bursary
 - Residential bursary (for Shuttleworth students only)
10. To ensure the funding has a positive impact, priority will be given to those defined as vulnerable learners, those eligible for free meals, and to those facing barriers to enrolling or attending their course due to equipment or travel costs. Once enrolment has finished and all priority costs have been met, any surplus funding may be used to award discretionary hardship bursaries.

Levels of financial support

Cost Type/ Household Income	< £16,190 (Band 1)	£16,191 to £30,000 (Band 2)	£30,001 +
Travel Bursary	£450 per year	£450 per year	£0 (unless continuing student under 19)
Essential Course Costs	90% of total cost	50% of total cost	£0
Vulnerable Learner Bursary	£1,200 pa (or pro rata)	£1,200 pa (or pro rata)	£1,200 pa (or pro rata)
Residential Bursary	£833/term	£664/term	£0
Meals Bursary	£2.50/day	£0	£0
Discretionary Hardship Bursary	Up to £100 per term	£0	£0

11. Discretionary support is assessed against household income. Students under 19 and living at home and/or supported by parents/ guardians are assessed against their own and their parents'/guardians' income, except in exceptional circumstances.
12. Means-testing will be rigorous but not excessive and evidence from other recent income assessment will be used wherever possible.

Eligibility

13. To be eligible for the 16-18 Bursary in 2016/17, a student must be aged under 19 on the 31 August 2016.
14. Students enrolled on 14-16 provision are not eligible for the 16-18 Bursary. However, students aged under the age of 16 on 31 August 2016 and enrolled on an eligible programme of learning may receive financial support with the agreement of the Bursary Panel.
15. Students on higher education courses are not eligible for the 16-18 Bursary.
16. Young people must satisfy the residency criteria set out in the Education Funding Agency (EFA) guidance, and must include the appropriate evidence in their application to prove eligibility:
 - i. Completion of the residency section stating 'ordinary residence in the UK for three years preceding the start date of the course with main purpose other than for education'.
 - ii. Learning agreement showing home fees being charged.

Conditions

General conditions

17. Applications to the 16-18 Bursaries will be accepted from 1 June 2016 through to the specific fund closure date or when funds are exhausted, whichever is sooner. The panel may waive closing dates in exceptional cases of extreme hardship. Applications for vulnerable learner bursaries will be accepted throughout the academic year.
18. We reserve the right to request repayment of all or part of any payment received and/or return equipment provided if a student withdraws from their course. Students may be asked to return books or equipment at the end of their course.
19. Students may make more than one application to the fund in an academic year if their circumstances change or they apply for a secondary course in-year.
20. The College reserves the right to suspend or reduce payments where a student's attendance is giving cause for concern, in consultation with the personal tutor. We expect students to attend all their classes, and if attendance drops below 95% payments may be affected.
21. At the Panel's discretion, the above criteria may be waived in the event of:
 - a student facing a financial barrier as a result of high household income where a parent/guardian declares they are not supporting the student financially.
 - a student facing a unique financial barrier to learning.

Vulnerable learner bursary

22. Young people in the defined vulnerable groups will be eligible for the vulnerable learner bursary of £1,200 per academic year. Eligible groups are:
- i. Young person in care – local authority providing the care will confirm this.
 - ii. Young care leaver – the local authority that looked after the young person will confirm the level of care and duration.
 - iii. Young person in receipt of income support or universal credit – this must be in their own name, evidenced by letter/document from the benefits office.
 - iv. Young person in receipt of BOTH employment support allowance (or universal credit) AND disability living allowance (or personal independence payment).
23. This will be paid as a meals bursary of £10 per week (£12.50 at The Bedford Sixth Form) for 33 weeks, with the balance paid as fortnightly cash payments, subject to a student's continuing good attendance on their course.
24. Where the student's circumstances change in-year and they become eligible as a vulnerable learner, they will receive a pro-rata amount of the vulnerable learner bursary, which will be from the date the student became eligible to the end of the academic year.
25. Where a student is enrolled on a course of less than 30 weeks, the vulnerable learner bursary will be adjusted to an appropriate pro-rata amount e.g. 15 week course = £600.
26. A vulnerable learner may also be awarded essential course costs, for example for kit and equipment, but is not eligible for the travel or discretionary hardship bursaries.

Travel bursary

27. Local authorities continue to have a duty to publish policies on post-16 subsidised travel. However, this is not a duty to provide subsidised travel and local authority support has reduced year on year.
28. The College's travel bursary matches the level of contribution that a student would generally receive from their local authority towards their travel costs. A contribution from the student will still be required to meet the cost of travel depending on their distance from College.
29. Payments for the travel bursary will be made monthly at £45 paid directly to the student, unless the student is using the pre-arranged Shuttleworth bus, then the payment is made internally towards the cost of running the service.
30. Students living in local authorities that continue to provide travel support will be required to apply to the local authority in the first instance where

their assessment indicates that they would be eligible for support. If their application is rejected and they can evidence this with a rejection letter, a travel bursary of £450 for the year may be awarded, providing they are not in receipt of other forms of subsidised travel. This will be means-tested, and available to those with a household income of £30,000 or less.

31. Different arrangements apply to Shuttleworth students using College-provided transport. See paragraph 9 above.

32. The closing date for the travel bursary is 16 December 2016.

Course costs bursary

33. Some courses have essential costs including books, materials, equipment, uniform or trips. So that these do not present a barrier to participation in learning, a discretionary bursary of up to 90% of course costs will be awarded, subject to household income.

34. As BSF book costs vary between courses, a book grant of £50 towards costs will be given to BSF students applying for help with course costs and in assessment band 1 or 2.

35. The closing date for the course costs bursary is 21 October 2016, subject to funding being available.

Discretionary hardship bursary

36. The hardship bursary may be awarded to students whose household income is within band 1 only. This is to support those in greatest financial hardship with the ongoing costs of being at College, including:

- contributing to non-essential costs
- attending university open days/interviews
- purchase of items of stationery and printing.

37. Discretionary hardship bursaries will be awarded where a student has a barrier to learning not covered by the other 16-18 bursary strands.

38. Priority will be given to essential course-related costs, meals and travel, and discretionary hardship bursaries will not normally be awarded before January, subject to funds remaining.

Residential bursary fund

39. The total cost of residential accommodation at Shuttleworth in 2016/17 is £3,960 for the academic year.

40. To be eligible for RBF, a young person must be aged under 19 on 31 August 2016 in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. Where a young person turns 19 during their course, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 or to the end of their course, whichever is sooner.

41. Due to the high demand of residential funding, the amount of support for band 1 students is capped at £2499 to allow more students to be supported with the cost of residential accommodation.
42. After means-testing priority is given to students who live the furthest from the Shuttleworth campus with poor or no transport links.
43. Students may receive both a 16-18 bursary (for example, for essential equipment) and a residential bursary. Where a student is also eligible for both the vulnerable learner bursary and the residential bursary, the Panel will determine the level of need.
44. The closing date for the residential bursary is 21 October 2016 or when funds are exhausted, whichever is sooner.

Meals Bursary

45. The meals bursary will be awarded at the level of £10 per week for each week of timetabled attendance at College (£12.50 at the Bedford Sixth Form where classes are timetabled over 5 days).

Childcare

46. Care to Learn will continue to support students under the age of 20 years for 2016/17 academic year. It provides support with the cost of Ofsted-registered childcare up to £160 per week per child.

Payments

47. Travel will be paid monthly. Discretionary hardship, where applicable, will be paid termly. Vulnerable learner bursaries will be paid fortnightly to support this group of students in managing their finances. Essential course costs are generally one-off payments.
48. Direct payments made to students will be through BACS transfer, to accounts in the student's name only, unless otherwise requested in the application form by the student, or parent/guardian/social worker in the event of the student being considered incapable of managing their own finances or it being a possible safeguarding concern.
49. Wherever possible, payments will be made direct to a supplier for essential course materials and uniforms, or via internal College transfer where appropriate.

Monitoring

50. Monitoring of the 16-18 bursary is the responsibility of the Director of Student Services with the Financial Controller. Expenditure is monitored monthly and reported to the Bursary Panel via panel meetings.
51. Take-up of the 16-18 bursary is monitored annually in relation to retention and reported in the self-assessment report.

52. Feedback from students on the impact of the bursary on their learning is collected annually by Student Services.

The Bursary Panel

53. The bursary panel comprises the Director of Student Services (chair), Financial Controller, Student Finance Manager, Student Wellbeing Manager and Student Support Advisers (Shuttleworth and BSF). A Student Finance Adviser provides administrative support to the panel.

54. The panel meets fortnightly during July, August and September, and thereafter as required, to approve Bursary payments. Panel dates are published in advance.

55. The panel has the right to vary the above criteria in exceptional circumstances, and chair's action is permitted in cases of urgent hardship. The panel reviews the criteria annually and makes recommendations for changes to the College Executive.

56. Appeals against decisions of the panel must be raised in writing to the Quality Manager within 10 days of the decision being notified. Appeals are acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt and resolved within 21 working days.

Lesley Ferguson
Director of Student Services