

Colchester Institute

19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund Guidelines for 2018 – 19

These guidelines apply to students who are aged 19 and over, whose course is not eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan (level 2 courses; some 1st level 3 courses for 19-23 year olds)

What is the 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund?

The 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund is provided to Colchester Institute by the government and is aimed at supporting students who are aged 19 and over whose course is **not** eligible for an advanced learner loan. The fund aims to help students overcome any financial barriers they may face in attending college.

Students aged 19 on 31st August 2018 who started a two year programme before their 19th birthday should apply for funding from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Students who are 19 or over on 31st August 2018 and have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) should apply for funding from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Awards are based on specific financial needs for college related costs for such things as transport, meals, books and equipment. The bursary fund cannot provide help with costs unrelated to your course, such as general living expenses, nor can it be used as an attendance incentive.

Are you eligible for a discretionary bursary?

If you live with your parents and you are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits, or if you are financially dependent on your parents and your parents claim one of the following benefits, you can apply for a discretionary bursary. If you live in the parental home and are not supporting yourself, your parent's financial situation will be taken into account.

If you live away from the parental home, your application will be means tested against your benefits or income. If you have a partner, your partner's income will also be taken into account.

Qualifying benefit	Evidence required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Income Support• Income based Job Seeker's Allowance• Income related Employment and Support Allowance• Working Tax Credit with a gross annual income of not more than £16,190	<p>A letter confirming benefit entitlement from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job Centre Plus• Department for Work and Pensions• HMRC Tax Credit Award Letter for 2018/19 which shows income from

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Tax Credits (but not in receipt of Working Tax Credits) with a gross annual income of no more than £16,190 • Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit • Universal Credit 	<p>2017/18 - <u>full</u> letter required</p> <p>If your letter is older than 3 months, a recent bank statement must be provided showing the relevant payment going into the bank account within the last 3 months</p> <p>Written statement confirming which benefit(s) universal credit has replaced. If employed, P60 and current payslip</p> <p>Any letter provided must confirm the name and address of the person receiving the benefit</p>
<p>You are currently of No Fixed Abode eg living in emergency accommodation or homeless</p>	<p>Please speak to Student Services</p>

When and how should you apply?

If you are eligible for the discretionary bursary, please complete an Application for Student Funding 2018 / 2019.

All sections should be fully and clearly completed. Photocopied supporting evidence should be sent in with each application form. Please do not send original documents as we do not return documents.

Your completed form and supporting evidence should be handed in to or posted to:

Student Services
Colchester Institute
Sheepen Road
Colchester
Essex
CO3 3LL

For courses starting in September 2018, applications should be received by the Student Services office by 1st November 2018. If you find yourself in financial hardship after this date it is important that you still contact Student Services. Applications received after 1st November will be considered on a pro-rata basis subject to need and the availability of funds.

What happens after you submit an application form?

We will assess your application and write to you or email you with a decision. If you are successful we will tell you how much you have been awarded, what the award is for, how the award will be made and when you can expect to receive any payment.

We will use the email address that you provide on the front of the application form to contact you with details of any additional information required or details of your award, so please make sure that the email address is clearly written on the form.

During busy periods, it can take up to 15 working days to assess your application and we may telephone you with our decision. If you provide us with telephone contact details, please ensure that you check your voicemails regularly.

Please note that **all payments are dependent on your attendance record and you displaying satisfactory behaviour during your time at Colchester Institute. You will be expected to demonstrate commitment to your course through completion of work and engagement in class activities. The College will expect you to maintain an attendance of 90%.**

- Applications received on or before 31st July will be processed before the end of August.
- Applications received on or after the 1st August may take longer to process so you should ensure that you budget for any expenses that you are likely to incur during your first weeks at College.

If your application is unsuccessful, we will write to you explaining why.

What can the bursary fund pay for?

****Important: The college support fund will not make any reimbursements for items purchased by you prior to your form being assessed, unless authorised by the Student Services Manager.****

Course costs – the bursary fund can help with payment of any course costs confirmed by your tutor as essential to the course. Course costs may include books, equipment, uniform, membership fees, UK trips and DBS check. If you need help with any of these costs, please make sure that you tick the relevant box on the application form.

- **Books** – the fund will make a contribution towards the cost of books confirmed by your tutor as essential for your course. Payment may be made by either BACS payment into your bank account or if course books are available through the college on-line store, we will make the on-line store payment on your behalf.
- **Equipment and uniform** – for sports, catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy students, payment for equipment and uniform will be made directly by the College either to the supplier or via the on-line shop. All other equipment and uniform payments will be made by BACS payment into your bank account.
- **AAT Membership Fees** – a contribution towards the cost of AAT membership will be made by BACS payment into your bank account.

- **Compulsory trips** – When you apply for your bursary you may not know details of compulsory trips for your course. If you have requested help with trips from the discretionary fund, it is important that you speak to Student Services as soon as you become aware of the trip dates, location and price. All compulsory UK trips will be automatically considered. Compulsory trips outside of the UK will be considered on an individual basis. Student Services will make payment for the trip via your College on-line shop account.

Trips are paid for on a first come, first served basis as funding is limited and it is not possible to guarantee payment for trips if the funding has been exhausted.

- **DBS check** – If you are required to pay for a DBS check, payment will be made by the college as an internal transfer.
- **Tuition fees** – in exceptional circumstances, an award for tuition fees may be considered. Any award towards tuition fees will not exceed 75% of the fee payable and you will be responsible for paying the balance of the fee.
- **Meals** – If you have been made a discretionary award for meals at college, you will receive a meal credit to the value of £3 for each day that you have timetabled lessons at College. No cash payments can be made for free college meals if there is a refectory on the campus that you attend. However, if you attend a campus without a refectory or you are undertaking work placement, a cash award will be made by BACS payment into your bank account.

You can also top up your meal award by using UpayChilli, the easy to use payment system at Colchester Institute refectories and cafes, which is open to all students. Upaychilli will always use College awarded meal credits first, so any college funding is deducted from your account before any top-up credit is used. To register for your UpayChilli Account, go to www.upaychilli.com

Please contact Student Services at least two weeks prior to starting placement if you require a cash payment for your placement weeks.

- **Travel** – to receive support with travel you must live over 1 mile away from the campus that you attend. We use the AA Routeplanner to calculate the distance from your home address to college. If you wish to check the distance yourself the website is: <http://www.theaa.com/route-planner/index.jsp>
The Colchester campus postcode is CO3 3LL, the Clacton campus postcode is CO15 6JQ and the Braintree campus postcode is CM7 5SN.

As funding is provided by public money, we are required to ensure support given provides the best value for money. Travel support may be in the form of a bus pass, train pass or college organised transport, whichever is the cheapest option.

If your journey to college can be made on an Arriva bus, First bus, a Greater Anglia train or College organised transport the College will purchase a travel

pass on your behalf. You can collect your travel pass on the first day of the autumn, spring and summer terms. You should be aware that that it is your responsibility to fund your travel to college on the first day of each term.

If you use any other bus company to travel to college, payment for a travel pass will be made by BACS payment into your bank account.

In some instances, your travel award maybe the cost of purchasing a termly ticket from the local authority.

If you drive to college and would like help with petrol costs, the distance to college from your home address will be calculated using the AA Routeplanner website. Mileage is paid at 15p a mile (cars) and 7p a mile (motorbikes and mopeds) and will be based on the distance of your return journey to college x the number of days you attend college. Payments will be made by BACS payment into your bank account. Payments for petrol will not exceed the cost of travelling to college by public transport.

It is important for you to be aware that it can take up to two weeks after the start of a term for the travel payment to be made into your bank account and it is important that you budget for any travel costs prior to the travel payment reaching your account.

Travel support for the spring and summer terms may be affected if you do not maintain an attendance of at least 90% in the preceding term.

- **Stationery / Printer credits** – if you are studying at either the Colchester campus or the Braintree campus you will receive a £30 college shop voucher towards the cost of your stationery / printer credits. This voucher will be held for you in the college shop at Colchester / in Student Services in Braintree and you should let staff know that you have been awarded a voucher when you wish to make a purchase. The cost of your purchases will then be deducted from the voucher.

If you are studying at the Clacton campus, your stationery / printer credit award will be £30 paid into your bank account by BACS, unless your tutor requests that a stationery voucher is held for you at the Colchester college shop. If you are awarded a shop voucher, your tutor will place orders with the college shop for any stationery / printer credits that you require.

- **University Interviews and Open days**

If you incur travel costs as a result of attending a university interview or open day then we may be able to help you with this expense. This will be dependent on the budget that we have available at the time.

You will have to cover the upfront costs yourself then we will refund your transport costs on the production of public transport tickets **and** university interview or open day letter. If you travel to the open day by car we will pay

towards petrol costs, providing this does not exceed the cost of travel by public transport. We will not pay for overnight accommodation.

Funding for travel to interviews and open days will be capped at £200 in total.

- **Travel to Job / Apprenticeship Interviews**

As above. Payment on production of tickets **and** interview letter.

- **UCAS application fee**

A contribution towards the cost of applying to UCAS. Evidence must be provided to show whether to you have made a single or multiple UCAS application

- **Other costs**

If you require funding for any course related costs not specified above, please complete an Application for Student Funding in the normal way. You should include full details of the item that you are looking for help with and a short statement covering why you consider the item to be necessary for your course

- **Childcare (students aged 20 and over)**

If applying for help with childcare, the childcare application form must be completed in addition to the student funding application form.

Childcare funding provides targeted support for students who are at risk of not starting learning, or not continuing learning, as a result of difficulty getting childcare due to the cost.

Colchester Institute may offer childcare funding to pay for childcare and all awards will be subject to the provider being registered with Ofsted.

If a learner withdraws from College or has funding declined because attendance has fallen below 90%, the College will take no responsibility for payment of outstanding fees to childcare providers. Students who withdraw will be liable for any childcare costs incurred after their last day of attendance.

Childcare will pay:

- For the time you spend in timetabled classes
- Travel time to and from college
- 100% fees for a first child, 50% for a second child. There is no assistance for any other children
- A maximum award of £5,500 per year per student
- To an Ofsted registered childcare provider during term time only

Childcare will **not** pay:

- For Christmas and Easter holiday periods and periods of half term
- Deposits or make advance payments
- If the learner changes the number of days or hours their child attends their childcare provider and fails to inform the College Childcare Administrator
- If there is a partner at home who can look after the child/children while you are studying

Please note that any free government funding for 2, 3 and 4 year olds must be used for college and placement days before additional hours can be paid for with college funding.

Colchester Institute reserves the right to cap childcare fees if they are considered to be excessive.

Funds are capped and allocated at the discretion of the Colchester Institute College Support Fund Committee, in line with current policy. The funds are limited and childcare funding applications received when the fund is low or exhausted may be refused.

Colchester Institute reserves the right to alter or amend the childcare funding policy at any time.

Options for Childcare

Your children must be placed with either a private nursery or an Ofsted registered childminder.

School age children can be placed with a registered childminder, or after school club.

What can't the bursary fund pay for?

- **Locker Deposits** – students requiring a locker are asked to pay a deposit which is returned at the end of the year. As the deposit is refundable, we cannot provide support with this cost.
- **Attendance bonuses / incentives** – all payments to you are based on you achieving a minimum of 90% attendance and displaying satisfactory behaviour during your time at Colchester Institute. The bursary fund does not reward students with additional monies if they achieve good attendance levels throughout the year.
- **General living costs** – eg accommodation, utility bills, mobile phone bills
- **Car parking** – we do not pay for car parking, either on or off site
- **Associated trip costs** – funding for passports, suitcases etc will not be covered by the fund

Do you need to have your own bank account?

Yes. We cannot make payments to you in cash or by cheque.

If you make an application are you guaranteed support?

No. Unfortunately the budget we have available is limited and we may not be able to meet your funding requirements. We would advise you to put in an application as soon as possible as funds are limited and can run out.

If you are successful in your application are there any conditions on your award?

Yes. If you are awarded a discretionary bursary then you will need to meet conditions of attendance and behaviour in order to receive your award. The College will expect to see attendance of over 90% maintained throughout the year.

If you feel that you have extenuating personal circumstances that have affected your attendance, it is important that you speak to Student Services as soon as possible.

If you are in receipt of a benefit from the Department of Work and Pensions and you receive an award from the bursary fund, it is your responsibility to tell the DWP about the award as it may affect your eligibility to some benefits.

What should you do if you are not happy with the outcome of your application?

You can appeal our decision if:

- You think that we have assessed your application incorrectly
- You think that the level of support you have been awarded is significantly less than you need to attend College

Appeals should be made in writing to the Student Services Manager. Appeals should be made within 15 working days of you receiving a decision from us.

What should you do if you are not sure if any of this applies to you or if you have any questions regarding financial support?

Contact Student Services. We can talk you through whether or not you are eligible. We can help you complete the application form, advise you on the evidence we need from you and answer any questions you may have.

What happens to my funding if I withdraw from my course?

If you leave Colchester Institute you will not be eligible to receive further payments and may need to repay a proportion or, in exceptional cases, all of the money paid to you. You may also be asked to return any equipment you have received that has been funded by this scheme.

Student Services contact details

Phone: 01206 712078 / 01206 712296 / 01206 712446

Email: student.finance@colchester.ac.uk

Call in: Student Services offer a drop-in service. We are open:-

Colchester: 8.30am – 5.00pm (Monday – Thursday) and from 8.30am – 4.30pm (Friday).

Braintree (term time only): 8.30am – 4.30pm (Monday – Thursday) and 8.30am – 2.00pm (Friday)

Clacton students can visit the Information Centre : 8.30am – 5.00pm (Monday – Thursday) / 8.30am – 4.30pm (Friday)

When should I re-apply for financial assistance?

Applications for financial help are valid for one academic year only. Should you return to College in September 2019 and still require financial assistance, a new application form must be completed and up to date supporting evidence supplied.