

16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy 2023 - 2024

Introduction

This policy outlines the guidelines for the management and allocation of the 16-19 Bursary Fund and the 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary Fund for the 2023/2024 academic year.

These funds are provided to the College by the government and are aimed at supporting learners who are experiencing financial difficulties with essential costs associated with their studies. This could include transport, books and equipment, UK compulsory trips (overseas compulsory trips considered on individual basis) and other essential course related costs.

Funds are limited and targeted at those most in need. Funds are allocated on a first come, first served basis. All requests for funding will be considered although it may not always be possible to help. If the funding is exhausted, the College reserves the right to close the fund. Throughout this form the word 'student' will be interchangeable with the word 'learner', both referring to the individual undertaking the programme of study.

Eligibility and Conditions

Eligibility: Learners are eligible to apply for funding if they meet the requirements as stated in the Funding Rules 2023/2024 issued by the Education & Skills Funding Agency.

Eligibility to funding does not give the individual the right to funding as funding is not an entitlement. Assistance awarded to a learner will always be conditional on behaviour, commitment to the course and maintaining a **minimum of 90% attendance**. Colchester Institute reserves the right to remove support due to students' misbehaviour, fraud or if the reputation of the College is brought into disrepute. If the learner does not meet the conditions or withdraws from the course then they may be requested to return equipment and any cash awards they have received.

Awards will be made in accordance with the published guidance from the Education & Skills Funding Agency. While it is recognised that learners face financial pressures, funding is not a right and the College has a duty to make sure that funds are awarded fairly and to the learners most in need.

Application Process

Applicants must complete the relevant application form, and clearly identify the support that they feel they need to achieve their course of study. Students aged 19 who started a two year programme before their 19th birthday should apply for funding from the 16-19 Bursary Fund

Students who are aged 19 or over at the 31st August 2023 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) should apply for funding from the 16-19 Bursary Fund

Applicants must demonstrate their financial need by providing the income information and supporting evidence as detailed in the application form. Each application for financial assistance will be considered by a College Fund Administrator and decisions will be made based on the information provided and the eligibility criteria for the different type of awards.

These are detailed in the sections below.

For courses starting in September 2023, applications should be submitted online by 1st November 2023. Applications received after this date will be considered on a pro-rata basis subject to need and availability of funds.

16-19 Bursary Funds (Learners under 19 years of age at 31 August 2023)

The 16-19 Bursary fund has two elements:

16-19 Discretionary Award

Open to students whose household net income plus benefits is below £30,000. Awards will be targeted towards students who face the greatest financial barriers to participation to cover course related costs including: transport; trips (within the UK); books and equipment; meals at College. 'In kind' payments will be made which may include: bus / train tickets; Colchester Institute meal credit; and equipment costs.

Travel 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 BACS payment, and cost may be a factor when assessing a travel award

Payment by BACS

Where a payment is made by BACS, the student MUST provide receipts for items / tickets purchased. Failure to produce receipts may result in the student being asked to return the BACS payment and may also affect future funding

Students qualifying for awards in term 1 will continue to be supported in terms 2 and 3 **providing the minimum 90% attendance rate is maintained.**

Students also have the option of applying to Essex County Council for Post 16 Travel Assistance: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/school-transport/post-16-transport>

Additional information required for the 16-19 discretionary award

Evidence of income which should be one of the following:

- Working Tax Credit / Child tax Credit (net annual income + tax credits totalling no more than £30,000)
- Child Tax Credit (& not eligible for Working Tax Credit)
- Jobseekers Allowance (income based)
- Employment & Support Allowance (income related)
- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Universal Credit (UC payment + take home pay totalling no more than £30,000); if self employed copy of company registration or tax return form

16-19 Vulnerable Bursary

An award of up to £1,200 a year for young people in the following defined vulnerable groups:

- Young people receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner
- Young people receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right
- Young people in Local Authority care on voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or who are under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989) or who are care leavers.

The vulnerable bursary is awarded to help students in paying for course related costs, such as books, equipment, uniform, kit, travel, trips, DBS and stationery. The costs associated with the course will be covered by the bursary.

Please note that the full £1200 vulnerable bursary is not automatically given if there is no financial need. Awards will be based on the amount that you need to participate in education. There is the possibility that the outcome of your application will be an award of less than £1200 or no award if you do not have any relevant costs. Awards from this bursary cannot be used to support living costs

Additional information required for the vulnerable bursary

Evidence confirming benefit entitlement. If claiming Universal Credit, additional evidence will be required to show that the young person is living independently (eg tenancy agreement). The evidence must not state any conditions that prevent the young person from participating in further education or training. Written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked-after status from the Local Authority, or the leaving and care service.

Estranged learners

Learners who are estranged from the family home can find information regarding benefits that they may be eligible to receive on the Turn2Us website (www.turn2us.org.uk). The Student Welfare team can signpost students to additional sources of help. Students can also apply to the Colchester Institute Foundation Trust for financial help while their benefit claim is being assessed. CIFT application forms are available from the Student Finance team or can be found on the Colchester Institute website.

Awards for living costs are not available from the 16-19 Bursary Fund as living costs are outside the scope of the fund.

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

Appeals

Learners can appeal against decisions taken by the College Fund Administrators in writing to the Student Services Manager.

Please note: Applications for financial help are valid for one academic year only. Should you return to College in September 2024 and still require financial assistance, a new application form must be completed and up to date supporting evidence supplied.

(All figures correct at the time of printing)