

New City College 19+ Bursary (Discretionary Learner Support Fund) Guidance 2023-24

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of the bursary, allocated to the college by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), is to support students with a specific financial hardship preventing them from participating or continuing in education.
- 1.2 The criteria and procedures operated by the college for allocating bursary funds are based on ESFA funding guidance (see Appendix).
- 1.3 Students are assessed on their individual financial need with course related costs in addition to eligibility when awarding bursary funding.
- 1.4 Students will be required to show supporting evidence that they meet the required criteria. Copies are securely retained for audit purposes.
- 1.5 Payments are conditional on students meeting agreed standards of attendance and behaviour.
- 1.6 Bursary awards only cover one academic year and students must reapply for support on an annual basis.
- 1.7 The availability of bursary awards is subject to the amount of funds allocated from the ESFA.
- 1.8 It is students' responsibility to tell the Department for Work & Pensions about any financial support they receive, as learner support payments may affect their eligibility to state benefits.

2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1 Students must meet the following criteria to be eligible to apply for bursary support:

- Be age 19 or over on 31 August 2023.
- Satisfy the residency requirements in the ESFA funding Guidance
- Be on an ESFA or Greater London Authority funded course.
- Have an individual income of under £26,000 gross per year.

2.2 Apprentices or students on higher education courses are not eligible to apply.

2.3 Students with a low individual income of up to £26,000 gross are eligible to apply for financial support. They should be in receipt of one of the following Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) benefits or Inland Revenue Tax Credits and supply evidence:

- Income Support
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit (3 previous month's statements)

- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- DWP Pension Credit
- Working/Child Tax Credits

2.4 If no benefits are claimed, evidence of earned income must be supplied. This should be copies of payslips for 3 previous months, a P60 for the previous April, an original letter on employers' headed paper showing yearly income or a Self-Employed Tax Return document. Benefit documents and pay slips must be dated within 3 months of the date of application.

2.5 Students whose income is in excess of £26,000 can still apply and their cases will be considered. However, they will need to demonstrate exceptional circumstances and evidence serious financial difficulties.

2.6 The amount awarded to students will be dependent on the number of eligible applications received and the amount of funds available.

2.7 Payments cannot be backdated for periods before the application was submitted.

2.8 Students who are funding their course with an Advanced Learner Loan must supply evidence of an approved loan before an award can be considered.

3 BURSARY FUNDS & AWARDS

3.1 There are 3 types of funds:

- 19+ Bursary - Discretionary Learner Support
- 20+ Childcare Support
- Advanced Learner Loan Bursary

3.2 If students meet the eligibility criteria, then an assessment of their actual financial needs takes place. Bursary funding is designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation they face, and the college must ensure the funds go to those who genuinely need them. No student will automatically be awarded an amount of funding without an assessment of the level of actual financial need they have.

3.3 How much bursary students receive depends on:

- individual circumstances
- individual financial need: what course related costs students tell us they need help with on their bursary application
- programme length and days per week
- meeting agreed standards of attendance and behaviour
- the amount of funds available.

3.4 There are awards for travel, college essentials (stationery etc), college registration fees, professional membership fees, trips, compulsory kit/uniform/equipment/books and extra-curricular activities where these are essential to the study programme. Further support may also be available, for example for travel to work placements.

- 3.5 Travel awards are based on the distance lived from campus; there is no travel award if students live less than 1 mile from campus. The travel award will be a contribution towards the travel costs and the amount may change subject to available funds.
- 3.6 There are limited funds to help with the cost of tuition fees for 19+ learners. These are only available where exceptional circumstances can be evidenced. Students who are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan are unable to apply for financial support with course fees.
- 3.7 Some awards will be made in kind and some will be payments into bank accounts.
- 3.8 The ESFA do not expect students on distance learning provision to need help from the bursary fund because they do not have the kinds of costs the bursary is intended to cover (travel, equipment, and uniforms, for example). In the rare instances where the College identifies such a student does require financial help, we will provide support in kind.
- 3.9 The bursary is to help towards the essential costs of participating in education, not to support general living costs or household income. Assessments are based on individual financial need for support with education costs and income status.
- 3.10 Students on short courses of less than 12 weeks will receive a pro rata award.

4 CHILDCARE SUPPORT

- 4.1 Students aged over 20 can apply for support with childcare costs from the 19+ Adult Learner Support fund / Advanced Learner Loans Bursary. Where funding is awarded towards the cost of childcare with a registered provider, the award will only apply to the days on which the course runs. Funds will only be paid to an OFSTED registered childcare provider. The amount of funding available for childcare is limited and there is no guaranteed entitlement to the funds. Maximum award per week per child is £195.

5 ADVANCED LEARNER LOAN BURSARY FUND

- 5.1 Learners who are funding their course through an Advanced Learner Loan may be eligible to apply for bursary and childcare support if they meet the eligibility criteria set out in section 2.
- 5.2 Evidence of an approved loan must be provided before an application for financial support can be considered.

6 EMERGENCY HARDSHIP

- 6.1 An element of funding will be set aside to provide a safety net for emergencies. The Group Director Student Support, Group Student Finance & Welfare Manager and the Welfare Advisor may issue emergency payments.

7 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 7.1 Applications for bursary are made online via the secure Pay My Student portal. There are links on the website, ProPortal accounts, the MyNcc App and the student VLE under Information \ Welfare, Bursary and Childcare.
- 7.2 Once a student has applied, their application will be reviewed and assessed by the Bursary Team. Students can log into the Pay My Student portal to see the progress of their application and correspondence. The college will only use the students' college email addresses for bursary communications. We may also send text messages.
- 7.3 Students can get in touch with the Bursary Team by email or by seeing the Bursary Assistant at a counter service session at their campus.

8 PAYMENTS

- 8.1 Payments are dependent on attendance of at least 90%.
- 8.2 A payment schedule letter will be sent to students.
- 8.3 Payments will be made by direct bank transfer; the bank account must be in the student's name. In some cases, such as students with learning difficulties, we can pay to a parent's/carer's bank account.

9 APPEALS

- 9.1 Students who are dissatisfied with the decision regarding their application or payment, are encouraged in the first instance to discuss the issue with the bursary staff via the email for their campus or at the campus counter service.
- 9.2 If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they can appeal the decision by emailing bursary@nccclondon.ac.uk. Students should state clear reason(s) for their appeal and produce supporting evidence if needed. The appeal will be considered within two college working weeks by two Managers not involved in the initial decision-making process.

APPENDIX

ESFA Funding Guidance 2023-2024: [Adult education budget: funding and performance management rules 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/adult_education_budget_funding_and_performance_management_rules_2023_to_2024.pdf)