

Student Bursaries & Financial Support Policy 2023-24

Effective for employees, students, governors and volunteers September 2023

Overall responsibility:	Principal
Implementation:	Assistant Principal of Student Services
Date issued:	September 2023
Date for review:	September 2024

Endorsed and approved by Policy & Strategy Group

Date: September 2023



Pat Brennan-Barrett

Principal

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1. INTRODUCTION

Northampton College receives an allocation of funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to support eligible students to meet the costs of participating in education.

The ESFA publish guidelines which set out the criteria for the use of these funds.

Eligible students will be required to show supporting evidence that they meet the required criteria. In certain exceptional circumstances, Northampton College may exercise its ability to make discretionary awards.

2. INFORMATION

Northampton College provides information about and promotes access to financial support via its publications, the college website, at student inductions and at promotional events i.e. open evenings and school's liaison events.

The application form for financial support is available on the college website.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All students aged 16 and over and who meet the residency criteria set out in national funding guidance and are studying an ESFA funded course are eligible to apply. Waged apprentices are not eligible.

4. ASSESSING ELIGIBILITY

All applicants will be asked to complete an application form available on the college website.

All new applicants will be sent details on how to apply for financial support in their pre-enrolment pack. Assistance with completing the application form is available from Student Services.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund, 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund and Advanced Learner Loans Bursaries are means-tested and applicants will be required to provide evidence to verify total household income. Students applying through the Advanced Learner Loan Bursaries for Additional Learning Support costs ONLY will not be means tested.

Students aged 19 or over who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are eligible for the 16-19 bursary. Applicants will be required to provide a copy of an up to date EHCP to access support if not already held by the college.

Priority for support will be given to those students with a household income of under £26,000 per annum gross increased by £2000 (per additional child) where three or more children aged under 18 are in full time education. The college may choose to use its discretion where household income is higher and it is identified that support is needed.

Evidence of household income will usually be Universal Credit statements, a recent Tax Credit Award Notice or income based benefit letter. For households not in receipt of any of these would be required to provide wage slips and bank statements or a Self Assessment Tax return to evidence household income.

To be eligible for financial support, it is expected that households have claimed ALL funds available to them from other sources. Therefore, if the student is aged under 20 and in full time education **your household should be in receipt of Tax Credits or Universal Credit in order to be eligible for support from the Bursary Fund.**

If you have not yet claimed Universal Credit, you would be expected to do so **BEFORE** applying for support from the Bursary Scheme. For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/welfare>

If your income is higher but you are in hardship you can still apply and your case will be considered, however, a supporting statement and evidence of serious financial difficulties must be included.

In addition students aged 16 – 19 in defined vulnerable groups are entitled to bursary support of up to £1200 where a financial need and relevant costs are identified (pro-rata according to length of course and hours of attendance). The defined vulnerable groups are:

- Students in the care of the Local Authority including unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- Students leaving care
- Students living independently and in receipt of Universal Credit (and can provide a letter from DWP evidencing that they are allowed to enter full time study as well as a tenancy agreement or child benefit letter for a dependent)
- Students in receipt of Personal Independence Payments

In some cases, a student might be eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups however, their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant costs. **Meeting the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups does not automatically mean funding will be given.**

Students who believe they qualify for this vulnerable groups bursary are required to provide evidence of their care status or benefits as above to support their application.

5. HELP TOWARDS MEETING COURSE RELATED COSTS

The 16 – 19 Bursary Fund and the 19+ discretionary Learner Support Fund and Advanced Learner Loans Bursary may be able to assist with costs where equipment is required to enhance a student’s access to learning or to increase levels of achievement.

Assessment of the level of support needed for each programme of study will be carried out in conjunction with information supplied by direct delivery teams regarding course related costs.

Where trips are funded through bursary support, payment will be made through internal college transfers only.

Funds will be made payable directly to the equipment or uniform provider where possible. Where paid to the student, a BACS transfer will be made. **It is not possible to make payments to family members or guardians other than if an applicant to the bursary is formally assessed as not having the capacity to manage their own financial affairs.**

The college does not support the purchase on laptops using its bursary funds, however, students aged 16-18 and on a full-time study programme will be loaned a laptop or chrome book for the duration of their study if it is a requirement for their course.

The bursary will only support costs where the items being paid for are more than £10.

All items purchased by the support funds remain the property of the college and must be returned if students do not complete their course.

6. HELP TOWARDS TRAVEL COSTS

Bursary funds for students aged 16-18 will be administered in conjunction with Local Authority Transport Scheme’s and Policies. In most cases, Bursary funds will be used to provide additional financial support where transport costs are not met in full by the local authorities’ scheme(s) and /or present a barrier to learning.

Support through bursary funds with the cost of travel is available to students who travel more than three miles to their site of study or work placement. A distance of one mile will be used for students in receipt of a vulnerable group bursary. Distance will be calculated using the shortest safe walking distance as identified on Google maps. Students with exceptional circumstances and /or Special Educational Needs who do not meet the requirements of the Local Authority Transport Policy will be considered during assessment and through the appeals procedure where necessary.

Travel support for students aged 16-18 will usually be in the form of a Stagecoach bus pass however the college will exercise discretion on this decision where another provider/ form of support is deemed more suitable or cost effective.

Travel support for students aged above 19 at the beginning of the academic year will be made in the form of a travel award based on distance. Awards will be made to a maximum value of £900 per academic year.

The college will support transport costs during term time only.

7. HELP TOWARDS MEALS

Students aged 16-18 at the beginning of the academic year who live in a household that is in receipt of one of the benefits below are entitled to access financial support for the provision of meals on the days they attend a full day of study or other activity that is part of their course. (e.g. work experience).

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Universal Credit with an income less than £7400 per annum
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Support under part IV of the immigration an Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed Element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190 as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
- Aged 19-23 with a valid EHCP

Students who were in receipt of Free School Meals at their previous school may also be eligible for support with meals. Evidence from the previous education establishment will be required.

Qualifying students will be provided with access to a meal in the college food outlets at both the Booth Lane and Daventry Campuses to the value of £5.00 per timetabled day.

Qualifying students based at our Lower Mounts campus and other off- site provision will be provided with supermarket vouchers via an online portal. Vouchers will be issued in instalments in line with college study review weeks. An award value of £5.00 per timetabled day will be made however all half termly awards will be rounded up to the nearest pound. Awards are based on attendance which is checked on a regular basis.

Students in receipt of a vulnerable groups bursary who do not otherwise qualify for free college meals are able to request access to the provisions of meals in college through the colleges catering facilities. Meals are chargeable at £5.00.

Students aged 19-23 at the beginning of the academic year are not eligible to apply for help with free college meals unless they are in possession of an EHCP plan.

8. HELP TOWARDS CHILDCARE COSTS

Students aged under 20 at the start of the academic year should apply for support with childcare costs through the Care to Learn scheme. Student Services staff can help with applications to Care to Learn.

Students aged over 20 can apply for support with childcare costs through the Discretionary 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 a third party. The third party must be registered with OFSTED and not be graded as "inadequate".

The amount of funding available for childcare is limited to £8000 per year (including funding from Early Years funding) and there is no guaranteed entitlement to the funds.

9. HELP TOWARDS COURSE FEES

There are limited funds available to assist with the cost of tuition fees for 19+ learners who are not fully-funded for their course costs.

Students will only be supported where alternative means of financial support are not available and exceptional circumstances can be evidenced.

In exceptional circumstances the college bursary funds may also be help with exam fees. Each application will be considered on its own merit.

Students who are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan are unable to apply for financial support with course fees.

10. HELP TOWARDS ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT NEEDS (Advance Learner Loan Students Only)

Support through bursary funds with the cost of Additional Learning Support needs is available to students who are formally assessed by the college as needing support with learning. Awards are available each academic year to a maximum award value of £1500 per student however the college reserves its right to consider exceptional levels of need/circumstances.

11.VULNERABLE GROUP BURSARIES

Where students are identified as being eligible for a vulnerable group bursary to support relevant costs for education, (to a maximum award level of £1,200) they will be awarded support to cover essential course costs including kit, equipment, trips, and travel (pro-rata for courses less than 30 weeks).

The college will consider all reasonable requests for additional relevant activities or relevant items that aid the development of a student's education and are linked to their study programme.

Relevant additional costs will be identified by college staff together with the student in receipt of the vulnerable bursary as part of the college support process. (i.e. 1:1's and progress review). Once agreed they will be forwarded to the bursary team for processing using the pro-forma in **Appendix B**.

The college does not support the direct purchase of personal computers or laptops by students.

12.MAXIMUM LEVEL OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE

The maximum levels of support for students aged 16-18 are as highlighted below. Student awards are strictly limited to a maximum award level of £5000 per student across all categories.

Age	Level of Income	Equipment	Travel	Trips
16-18	Income under £26,000	100%	100%	100%
16-18	Income based benefits	100%	100%	100%
16-18	Income over £26,000*	0%	0%	0%
16 -18	Further Education Free Meals available to students who meet published criteria in section 7 of this document.			

Students aged 19 or over who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are also eligible for the discretionary bursary.

Students aged over 19 who have previously accessed the 16-18 bursary in the preceding year (second year of a two year course) will be supported using the 16-18 bursary fund.

*The college will consider applications from families with a higher income where exceptional need is identified.

The maximum levels of support for students aged 19+ are as highlighted below. Student awards are strictly limited to a maximum award level of £5000 per student across all categories.

Age/Study	Level of Income	Equipment	Travel	Course Fees	Learning Support	Childcare	Trips
19+ FT	Income under £26,000	100%	Travel Award	Exceptional Circumstances	0%	100% *	100%
19+ PT	Income under £26,000	100%	Travel Award	Exceptional Circumstances	0%	100% *	100%
16-18	Income over £26,000**	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Advanced Learner Loans recipients	Income under £26,000	100%	Travel Award	0%	Maximum award of £1500 per year ***	100% *	100%

* Timetabled hours only. Students in receipt of **Early Years Funding** will have this deducted from their award. (Early years funding administered by the local authority, supports free early learning and childcare places to all three, four and eligible two year olds)

** Exceptional need/circumstances will be considered.

13.ADMINISTRATION OF THE STUDENT SUPPORT FUND

All students will be informed of how to apply via email at induction and on the College Website.

Students with special educational needs or under the care of the local authority will be offered 1:1 support with completing the application process if requested/required.

All new students will be invited to complete an online application form to allow staff to assess the eligibility for an award. Applications must be completed before any awards can be made from the Support Funds.

Up-to-date, valid, supporting evidence will be requested at the time of application. Staff administering the fund will verify the information given on the application form, or ask for further evidence if not sufficient at the time of application.

Applications must be received by Friday October 20th 2023. Applications received after this date may not be processed. The college will maintain a contingency fund for the payment of bursaries to students who join the college after this date.

The nature of any award will be set out in the award email that will be sent to all applicants once their applications have been assessed.

Students will be informed of final decisions at the time of processing after a correctly completed application is submitted together with the relevant evidence.

Applications will be assessed and either approved or refused by at least two members of staff in the Student Services team.

Staff administering the fund will examine all applicants' attendance levels no less than once a term. Should an applicant's attendance drop below 90%, their award may be reviewed or adjusted.

Should an applicant withdraw from their chosen course of study and decide to leave college, they may be required to repay monies and / or return equipment supplied/bought by the support fund.

14.ALLOCATION

Applicants will be notified via email of the funding that has been awarded. All awards will be paid directly to the third party where possible, or via internal transfers between college cost centres. In all cases, the application will be judged on its individual merits as outlined in the ESFA guidelines. The amount awarded will be specific to each individual application.

15.APPEALS

If any student is dissatisfied with the decision regarding their award, they will be advised to complete an appeal form within 5 days of receipt of their award email. They should state clear reasons for their appeal and produce supporting evidence if needed. The appeal should be sent to the **Assistant Principal Student Services** who will respond to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. The appeal will be considered by the Assistant Principal and another manager not involved in the initial decision making process. Appeal forms are made available digitally.

16.LINKS TO RELATED COLLEGE POLICIES / PROCEDURES

- Transport Policy 2023/24

17.Appendices:

- Appendix 1: FINANCIAL SUPPORT APPEALS FORM
- Appendix 2: ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUEST FORM
- Appendix 3: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT STATEMENT
- Appendix 4: DATA PROTECTION IMPACT STATEMENT
- Appendix 5: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Appendix: 1

Financial Support Appeals Form 2023-24

You have the right to appeal if:

- You believe your application has been assessed incorrectly
- You have **exceptional circumstances** that you wish to be considered. (i.e. medical condition, financial hardship caused by debt relief plan, loss or significant change in employment)

You are unable to appeal if you are simply unhappy with your award. You must meet the essential criteria for assessment or be able to provide evidence of exceptional circumstances. Appeals for additional funding in addition to the maximum award of £5000 per student will not be considered.

Your appeal should be made within 5 working days of receiving either your bursary support meeting or a letter notifying you that you are not eligible for support.

Part 1 – Student Details

Student ID Number:

First Name(s):

Surname:

What are you appealing for?

Bus Pass

Kit & Equipment

Travel Costs

Free College Meals

Tuition Fees

Trips

Part 2 – Appeal Grounds

Evidence of any exceptional circumstances attached

Please detail below your grounds for appeal including any exceptional circumstances you wish to be taken into consideration.

Applicant Signature:

Date:

Please return this form to **Student Services** at any college centre. You will be advised of the outcome within 10 working days of receipt of this form. **The decision of the appeals panel will be final.**

OFFICE USE ONLY

Feedback for student (letter)

Unfortunately your appeal does not meet the essential criteria for bursary awards

Unfortunately your appeal does not provide sufficient evidence exceptional circumstances

Offer Instalments (bus pass and fees only)

Other:

Date:

Manager 1:

Date:

Manager 2:

Outcome of appeal

Appeal upheld? Yes No

Assessment

Does the appeal meet the essential criteria for bursary awards? Yes No

Is the student able to evidence exceptional circumstances? Yes No

Appendix:2



ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUEST FORM

This form should be completed by student in receipt of a vulnerable student bursary and with your academic coach, personal tutor or a member of the Student Services team. In all cases, Academic Staff will be consulted as to the appropriateness of the request in supporting your learning.

IMPORTANT: Please refer to our Bursary and Financial Support Policy for information on the help we can consider. It is important to note that we cannot provide funding retrospectively neither should you commit to any expenditure pending our decision. We are generally unable to assist where a statutory agency has responsibility for providing the funding.

- *Examples of what we cannot help with include: legal fees, private medical treatment, laptops and PC Purchase, debt repayments (please note that this list is not exhaustive).*
- *Examples of what we can help with include: additional books, additional learning materials, enrichment trips, UCAS fees (please note that this list is not exhaustive).*

Student Name:			
Student ID:		Date of request:	
College staff member request discussed with?			

What do you need extra help with?	How much does it cost?	Who will supply it? (company)	Which member of college staff have you discussed it with?

Please note that even if we can offer financial help, we may not be able to help with everything.

For office use only			
Date:		Signed:	

Appendix 3: EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This template has been designed to help you take action to improve services and practices which affect staff, students and other service users at Northampton College. By completing this template, you would have considered the impact that your policy, practice or service might have on particular social groups within the college community. The exercise will also provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate, where possible, that the College promotes equity, diversity and inclusion.

Once this Equality Impact Assessment has been created, please include on the last page of your policy document.

Policy Details	
What is the policy?	Student Bursaries and Financial Support Policy
Is it new or existing?	Existing
Department	Student Services
Policy Author (postholder title, name)	Mark Owen – Assistant Principal Student Services
Author of Equality Analysis	Mark Owen
Date of completion	01/09/2023

Aim and Objectives
Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the policy
The Policy describes the way in which the college allocates bursary funds to students who meet established criteria.

Policy Assessment				
Consider whether your policy might have an impact on various groups identified within the categories listed below and explain why you have reached this conclusion.				
Please tick (v) the identified level of impact (positive, negative, or no impact) and provide details of your findings.				
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Findings
Race			x	
Religion and/or belief			x	
Sex (Gender)			x	
Gender Identity			x	
Disability			x	

Age			x	
Sexual orientation			x	
Marriage and/or civil partnership			x	
Pregnancy and/or maternity (including surrogacy and adoption)			x	
Other identified group (e.g. carers)			x	

Action Planning			
How do you intend to mitigate or eliminate any negative impact identified?	If a positive impact is identified, how do you intend to promote or develop this opportunity?	Where negative impact has been identified, can it be justified? If so, explain how.	How do you intend to mitigate or eliminate any negative impact identified?

Monitor and Review	
How will you monitor the impact of your project once it has been put into effect?	
<p>Using data to monitor the impact of bursary funds on the recipients retention and success.</p> <p>College complaints procedures and annual review using student feedback.</p>	
Names and position of Impact Assessment Team (min of 3 preferably from areas across the College):	
Name	Position
Mark Owen	Assistant Principal – Student Services
Jan Hutt	Vice Principal – People and Organisational Development
Julie Kennedy	Welfare Officer
Equality Analysis Sign-Off Signature and Date: September 2023	

Review Date: September 2024

Appendix 4: DATA PROJECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Data Protection Impact Assessment

Does this Policy

- require the collection and use of data in addition that normally collected by the College?

Yes / No (if Yes complete Assessment point number 1)

- require the sharing of data with partners?

Yes / No (if Yes complete Assessment point number 2)

1. Is additional data being collected? If so please detail:

Yes. Details of household income and family/personal finances.

Is data collected personal and/or sensitive?

Yes

How will you collect, use, store and delete data?

Data is collected and stored digitally in a secure area. Data will be destroyed after 7 years.

2. Will you be sharing data with anyone? Please detail what data, with who and confirm a **Data Sharing Agreement** is in place

No

Describe the purposes of the processing / sharing: What are the benefits of the processing/ sharing – for you, and more broadly?

N/A

Consider how to consult with relevant stakeholders: describe when and how you will seek individuals' views – or justify why it's not appropriate to do so.

N/A

Describe compliance and proportionality measures, in particular:
What is your lawful basis for processing?

N/A

How will you ensure data quality and data minimisation?

N/A

What information will you give individuals?

N/A

Please attach a Risk Assessment if there are significant risks to data protection

Signed by Data Protection Officer

Name:

Date:

Appendix 5: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Version	Final
Ratified by	Policy & Strategy Group
Date Ratified	01/09/2023
Date Issued	01/09/2023
Expiry Date	01/09/2023
Lead Manager	Mark Owen
Name of Author	Mark Owen
Audience	College Staff, Students, Parents & Carers.
Communication Plan	Document Library, College Website