



Student Finance Policy

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Status: Approved

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Student Finance Policy

1. Policy Statement

The College provides financial support to Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) students who may struggle to fully participate in their course due to financial pressures. Support is offered in line with Government guidance, in a consistent and transparent way.

2. Scope

The Policy applies to the following support funds (links in Annex A):-

- 16 – 19 Bursary Fund
- Free Meals in Further Education
- 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund
- Advanced Learner Loan Bursary
- Higher Education Hardship Fund

3. Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to:

- **Provide timely and appropriate financial support to FE students who meet residency rules and have a household income below £30,000 net per year. The College has the right to review the income threshold mid-year subject to demand and available funds.**
- Support HE students who demonstrate a financial shortfall through an income and expenditure assessment, following Higher Education Support Fund Guidelines.

4. Policy

4.1 Further Education Students

Application Process

- Students must apply through the online bursary portal.
- Applications are processed in the order they are received.

- Funding is limited; awards may be amended during the year with notice.

Income Assessment

For households receiving Universal Credit, annual income is calculated by adding:

- Universal Credit payment
- Total take-home pay for the period
- Any rent paid directly to the landlord through UC

This total is multiplied by 12. For self-employed applicants, the **minimum income floor** is included as take-home pay.

Evidence

- Residency and income evidence must be uploaded to the portal.
- Evidence is stored securely and destroyed after 7 years in line with GDPR.

Eligible Support

Funding may cover:

- Travel
- Books, equipment, PPE, uniform, kit
- Childcare
- Registration, exam or membership fees
- Meals
- Essential curriculum trips
- Vulnerable student bursary

Conditions of Payment

- Payments depend on attendance, behaviour and course performance.
- Extenuating circumstances may be considered.
- Students who withdraw may be required to repay funds or return items.
- Emergency payments may be made without full evidence at the discretion of the Student Finance Manager and/or the Assistant Principal for Student Experience and Learning Support.

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- All payments are made to the student's bank account. In exceptional circumstances, payments may be made to a person nominated by the student if the student is unable to manage their own finances
- All communication is via the email or mobile number held on College records.
- Applications are processed within **6 weeks** of receiving all evidence.

Appeals

- Appeals must be emailed to the Student Finance team, addressed to the Student Assistance Panel.
- Students must explain how non-payment affects their ability to participate and provide evidence of hardship.
- Appeals are reviewed within **4 weeks** of receiving all evidence.

4.2 Travel Support

- Paid weekly in arrears, based on the cheapest travel route.
- Attendance below **75%** in the previous week normally results in no payment, unless a discretionary exception is approved by the teaching or welfare teams. Consideration will be given to students who are registered as young carers.
- No payment is made for weeks of full absence.
- Payments will be backdated for completed applications received before October half term.
- Fare cards reimbursed once with receipts; weekly travel receipts required once per term, payments may be withheld if receipts are not provided.
- Weekly travel payments capped at **£50**.
- Mileage reimbursed at **25p per mile** for travel by private car. No payments will be made for private car journeys of less than **3 miles**.
- Additional support may be provided for work placements where travel costs exceed the usual weekly amount. Evidence of additional cost and placement timesheet must be provided within 2 weeks.
- Support for EHCP students required to contribute towards their local authority travel costs may be considered on a case by case basis, subject to funds and local authority transport policy.
- Weekly travel payments will be issued on the last Friday of any mid-term or end of term holiday to ensure students can return to College, subject to available funds

4.3 Books, Equipment, Kit, Uniform, PPE

- Items required for curriculum delivery will be purchased directly by the department. During September and October, due to the high volume of applications, payments may be reimbursed on receipt of proof of purchase.

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- Claims must be made within the same term; late claims will be cancelled, unless the teaching team confirm they are required later in the academic year.
- Students who become eligible mid-year can only claim costs incurred from that term onward.

4.4 Trips

- Essential curriculum trips may be paid to the department.
- For overnight trips without meals included:
 - £5 per meal
 - £10 per evening meal
 - Claims must be agreed in advance and supported by receipts.
- Students who become eligible mid-year may have **outstanding** essential trip balances paid to the department if funds allow

4.5 Childcare

- Nursery grants must be used first before bursary support is calculated.
- Payments are made **every 4 weeks**, in arrears, directly to the childcare provider.
- Students must attend at least **75%** of classes unless an exception is approved by the teaching or welfare teams.
- Students who use the on-site childcare are expected to attend their scheduled classes on the same day.
- Providers must be Ofsted-approved.
- Support only covers scheduled class times and travel to the childcare provider if off site.
- Weekly childcare contribution capped at **£195 per student**.
- Deposits up to **£250 per child** and registration fees up to **£80** may be paid.
- Payments require an invoice.
- Retainers may be paid up to the weekly cap.
- Support for multiple children exceeding £195 per week requires approval from the Student Assistance Panel and College Leadership Team.
- Students under 20 follow **Care to Learn** rules. Childcare amounts can be topped up if above the £195 (London), £180 (out of London) Care to Learn limits, proof will be required.

4.6 Registration, Exam & Membership Fees

- One resit per student may be funded.
- Fees may be reimbursed with receipts, during September or October, or paid upfront with teaching team approval. If paid directly to the student a receipt will be required.

4.7 Meals (Free College Meals and Discretionary Meals)

- Full Time FE students receive **£6.50 per timetabled day** via their College ID card.
- Allowance reviewed termly and may change with notice.
- Work placement meals reimbursed up to **£6.50 per day** with receipts and attendance evidence.

4.8 Vulnerable Student Bursary

Eligible students include those who are:

- In care
- Care leavers
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit
- Disabled and receiving ESA plus DLA or PIP

Support is awarded based on actual financial need, as above

4.9 Laptop Loans

Students can borrow a bursary laptop for up to one year, as long as one is available.

If a laptop needs to be purchased, this will depend on:

- Available bursary funds
- Approval from the Assistant Principal (Student Experience & Learning Support)

Any laptop provided—whether borrowed or purchased—must be returned at the end of the academic year.

4.10 University Open Days and Interviews

Support towards university open days and interviews for the student will be considered, if requested in advance, subject to available funds and teaching team approval.

4.11 Higher Education Students

Application Process

- Students must complete the HE Hardship Fund form and email it with evidence.
- Applications processed in date order and subject to available funds.
- Evidence stored securely and destroyed after 7 years.

Awards

- Awards follow the Higher Education Support Fund Guidance.
- Support may cover course-related or personal costs depending on circumstances.
- Payments depend on attendance, behaviour and performance, with consideration for extenuating circumstances.
- Students who withdraw may need to repay funds or return items.
- Emergency payments or short-term loans may be issued at the discretion of the Student Finance Manager and Head of School Healthcare, Sports, Education & Human Sciences.
- All payments made to the student's bank account.
- Decisions communicated within **6 weeks** of receiving all evidence via email.

Appeals

- Appeals must be emailed to the Student Assistance Panel via the Student Finance team.
- Appeals reviewed within **4 weeks**.

5. Responsibilities

- **Executive Leadership Team:** Sets FE income thresholds based on funding allocations and previous demand.
- **Student Finance Team:** Processes applications, communicates outcomes, and makes payments.
- **Assistant Principal (Student Experience & Learning Support):** Authorises payments and reviews appeals (Further Education Students).
- **Head of School Healthcare, Sports, Education & Human Sciences:** Authorises payments and reviews appeals (Higher Education Students).
- **Student Finance Manager:** Authorises payments up to £150. Supports appeals and processes appeal applications for authorisation where evidence of debt/hardship is above £5,000.

6. Related legislation and documents

Department for Education (Further Education)

- 16 – 19 Bursary Fund Guide: 2026 - 2027
- Free meals in further education funded institutions guide: 2026 - 2027
- Adult skills fund: funding and performance management rules 2026 - 2027
- Advanced learner loans: funding and performance management rules 2026 - 2027

National Association of Student Money Advisors (Higher Education)

- Higher Education Support Fund Guidance 2026 - 2027

7. Approval and Review

Policy Originator:	Student Finance Manager
Approved by:	CLT
Date Approved:	
Review Interval:	1 Year
Last Review Date:	Summer 2025
Next Review Date:	Summer 2027
Audience:	Staff and students
Entered on SP:	

8. Appendices

Appendix A – Links to legislation/documents

16 – 19 Bursary Fund Guide 2026 to 2027	16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK
Free Meals in further education funded institutions guide: 2026 to 2027	Free meals in further education funded institutions guide: academic year 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK
Adult skills fund: funding and performance management rules 2026 - 2027	Adult skills fund: funding and performance management rules 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK
GLA Adult Skills Fund funding and performance management rules 2026 to 2027	https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/jobs-and-skills/training-providers-teaching-skills/adult-skills-fund/information-

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	adult-skills-fund-providers/gla-adult-skills-fund-funding-and-performance-management-rules-2026-2027
Advanced learner loans: funding and performance management rules 2026 - 2027	Advanced learner loans funding and performance management rules: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK
Care to Learn academic year 2026 - 2027: conditions of grant funding	Care to Learn academic year 2026 to 2027: conditions of grant funding - GOV.UK
Higher education support fund guidance 2026 - 2027 (Members only password protected)	INSERT WHEN 26/27 GUIDANCE IS AVAILABLE
Extra money from your University or College to study	Extra money from your university or college to study - GOV.UK

Appendix B – College Guidance/Links

Online Bursary Portal 2026 - 2027	https://nescot.paymystudent.com/portal/
Bursary Fund Guidance 2026 - 2027	https://www.nescot.ac.uk/bursary
Higher Education Hardship Fund Form 2026 - 2027	Link needs inserting once added to website

Funding availability and individual assessment

All awards are subject to eligibility, assessment of actual individual participation need and the funds available. Meeting an income threshold or vulnerable-group definition does not automatically create entitlement to a fixed payment. The College may prioritise or revise discretionary support where demand exceeds funding, but will communicate material changes fairly.

Equality and exceptional circumstances

Decisions will be made consistently and without unlawful discrimination. Attendance, behaviour or performance conditions will not be applied mechanically. Disability-related absence, safeguarding concerns, caring responsibilities, medical needs and other evidenced exceptional circumstances will be considered before support is reduced, suspended or recovered.

Data protection and evidence

Application evidence will be processed under the College Privacy Notice, UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Applicants should be told the purpose and lawful basis of processing, who information may be shared with, the retention period and how to exercise their information rights. Evidence will be limited to what is necessary and stored securely.

Appeals and complaints

An appeal reviews the financial-support decision under the process set out in this policy. A complaint about service, delay, communication or whether the process was followed may be made under the College Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy. Applicants will be told the outcome, reasons and any further route available.

Publication and accessibility

Before publication, all placeholder text and missing links, including the HE hardship guidance and application form, must be completed or removed. Alternative formats are available on request from quality@nescot.ac.uk.