

## 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Summary

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

Institutions are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Students who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen institution to make an application.

To be eligible for the bursary students must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2017 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2017 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2017 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- meet the residency criteria in ESFA 2017 to 2018 academic year funding regulations for post-16 provision
- be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be either
  - funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority
  - otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including Level 3) accredited by Ofqual or pursuant to Section 96 or the Learning and Skills Act 2000
- a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

To be eligible for the vulnerable bursary, students must be in one of the defined vulnerable groups:

- in care
- care leavers

- in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
- in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right

For vulnerable bursaries, institutions draw down funding (by submitting a funding claim) from the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) when they have identified students who meet the [vulnerable bursary](#) criteria.

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary, students must be facing financial barriers to participation and need help to stay in education.

Institutions receive discretionary bursary funding [allocations](#) from ESFA that they manage directly, deciding which students are eligible for help and how much they receive, in line with this guide and their own policies.

In the 2014 to 2015 academic year, additional funding for free meals for post-16 students attending further education funded institutions was introduced to provide parity with those young people attending school sixth-forms. In the 2016 to 2017 academic year, ESFA removed the ring fence between the free meals in further education allocation and the discretionary bursaries allocation. This flexibility remains in place for the 2017 to 2018 academic year.

Institutions are reminded that free meals in further education is an entitlement for those students who meet the eligibility criteria. Institutions must ensure they manage the single allocation appropriately to ensure all eligible students who successfully apply for free meals in further education are provided with one in line with the [free meals guide](#).

### **Eligibility criteria: all bursaries**

This section covers the basic eligibility requirements of the scheme (which mirrors eligibility for publicly funded 16 to 19 education and training). These criteria apply to both types of bursary – discretionary and vulnerable – unless otherwise noted.

#### **Age**

To be eligible to receive a bursary in the 2017 to 2018 academic year the student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2017.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they:

- are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or
- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

These 2 groups of students can receive a discretionary bursary while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues and their institution considers they need the additional support to continue their participation. Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the vulnerable student bursary.

### **Residency**

Students must meet the residency criteria in [ESFA funding regulation](#) for post-16 provision in the 2017 to 2018 academic year. This document also specifies the evidence institutions must see and retain for audit to confirm eligibility.

### **Accompanied asylum seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)**

Generally, asylum seekers are not entitled to public funds. Accompanied asylum seeking children (those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. If they are destitute they can apply to the Home Office for suitable housing and cash for essentials, but they are not eligible for other income.

As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application for asylum refused, institutions can provide in-kind student support such as books, equipment or a travel pass. Under no circumstances should an institution give cash to any asylum seeker unless they are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC).

### **Unaccompanied asylum seeking children**

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children do not receive cash support from the Home Office and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a vulnerable bursary ('in care' group).

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, institutions must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour the local authority must provide them with the same support and services as they do care leavers. As such, they continue to be eligible for a vulnerable bursary until they reach the upper age limit.

Where an asylum claim is not supported, the individual may not be able to stay legally in the UK. When asylum claims have been fully heard and the appeals rights exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds (with a few exceptions because the withdrawal of support would be seen as a breach of human rights).

## **Eligible education provision**

To be eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (for example Ofsted). The provision must also be either:

- funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority
- funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund
- otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or is pursuant to Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000
- a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

## **Specific groups of students: eligibility questions**

This section addresses common questions from institutions about whether particular groups of students are or are not eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

### **Students aged under 16**

Institutions should generally only pay bursaries to students aged 16 or over. However, in exceptional circumstances institutions may use their discretion to pay bursaries to younger students, for example, where a student is following an accelerated study programme. Exceptional circumstances do not include students aged 14 to 16 who are attending college as part of their key stage 4 programme.

### **Students aged under 19 studying higher education qualifications**

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is intended to help students with the costs of continuing in further education. Students aged under 19 who are enrolled on higher education qualifications are not eligible for support from the scheme. Separate student finance arrangements are in place to support students in higher education. Young people can find out more details at the [student finance website](#).

### **Students aged 19 and over at 31 August 2017 in the 2017 to 2018 academic year**

Students who are aged 19 and over on 31 August 2017 are not eligible for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund unless they:

- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are attending eligible education provision; or
- are a 19+ continuer, in other words, a student who is continuing on an eligible study programme they began aged 16 to 18

Other students aged 19 and over may be able to access adult Discretionary Learner Support. Students should talk to their institution to establish what help may be available to them.

No students aged 19 or over are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary.

### **Vulnerable bursaries**

Students who are in one or more of the groups below can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 (if they are participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more - institutions should pay a pro-rata amount for students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks). This reflects that students in these groups may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- getting [Income Support](#) (IS), or [Universal Credit](#) (UC) in place of Income Support, in their own right
- getting [Employment and Support Allowance](#) (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or [Personal Independence Payments](#) in their own right

Institutions are reminded that students do not need to live independently of their parents to be eligible for a vulnerable student payment - they can claim ESA or UC in their own right while living in the parental home. Institutions may wish to remind parents (in any application form they use or on their websites) that they will not be able to continue to claim Child Benefit if the student successfully applies for ESA.

Institutions are responsible for assessing if students are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary payment and for retaining evidence to support the decision. Institutions must submit a funding claim form to the SBSS to draw down vulnerable student bursary funds once they have confirmed eligibility.

The vulnerable bursary can be paid for each academic year the student is in education or training, as long as they continue to meet the scheme eligibility criteria.

Institutions can pay a vulnerable student more than £1,200 if they assess they need extra help to remain in education. Any payments over the £1,200 must be paid from their discretionary bursary allocation or from their own fund.

Equally, institutions may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a vulnerable bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need and so are not eligible on that

basis. For example, their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant costs. [Young people in the defined vulnerable groups who don't require bursary funding](#) provides more information.

For further information, please visit GOV.UK

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