

BURSARY POLICY

Responsible for Implementation: FUNDING & COMPLIANCE MANAGER

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Contents

1. Bursary Policy Statement & Intent
 2. Bursary Summaries
 - a. 16-19 Discretionary Bursary
 - b. 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary
 - c. 19+ Bursary
 3. Criteria
 4. Payments
 5. Conditions of Award
 6. Repayment
 7. Appeals & Complaints
-

About Us

Access Further Education Ltd ('The College') has subsidiary companies, trading names and trading partnerships through which it operates. The trading names and partnerships might have their own names or brands, but the legal entity for the purpose of this policy is Access Further Education Ltd. Trading subsidiaries, trading names and trading partnerships include Access Creative College ('ACC'), National College for Creative Industries ('NCCI') and Access Sport.

Bursary Policy Statement & Intent

The College is committed to ensuring that all Learners are supported to attend College & achieve their goals whilst studying with us. The College receives funding from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) each Academic Year to award to Learners facing specific barriers that would prevent their participation at College to enable them to remain in, or return to education.

The College is able to award Bursary Funds (where eligible) to support 16-19 year old Learners (inc. Learners with an EHC plan up until age 25), Learners funding their course with an Advanced Learner Loan and Learners at Centres with courses eligible for Devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding.

The intent of this policy is to detail the Financial Support available to our Learners and the eligibility criteria that must be met before any funds can be awarded. This is applicable to all Learners studying at both Access Creative College & Access Sport Centres.

All Bursary funds are managed by the Bursary Support team- Bursary.support@accessmusic.ac.uk. All applications are assessed on a first come first served basis and all email queries will be responded to within a 2 day SLA.

Applications are completely paperless utilising an online application and assessment portal:

<https://accesscreative.paymystudent.com/portal/>

The College are permitted to utilise 5% of the Student Bursary Fund allocation per annum to cover the costs of administering the Bursary.

Bursary Summaries

The College can award funds to the below Categories of Learners:

- 16-19 year old Learners (inc. 19+ Learners with an Education, Health & Care Plan)
- This also includes Learners eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary
- Learner's funding with an Advanced Learner Loan
- Learners studying at Centres with Devolved AEB Funding for their course

Support can be provided to the above groups of Learners for Free Meals, Travel costs, contribution towards kit, equipment and trip costs, Residential costs & Childcare.

16-19 Discretionary Bursary

Eligible Groups:

- Students who are aged between 16-18 as of 31st August of the Academic Year they are commencing their Programme of Study and who meet ESFA Residency Criteria
- Students who are aged 19+ who started their Programme of Study when aged 16-18 and are continuing this Programme of Study
- Students who are aged 19+ who are aged between 19-24 (or turning 25 within that Academic Year) and have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHC Plan)

16-19 Vulnerable Bursary

Eligible Groups:

- Students who are aged between 16-18 as of 31st August of the Academic Year they are commencing their Programme of Study or who started their Programme of Study when aged 16-18 and are continuing this Programme of Study, and meet the Criteria listed under the Criteria Section of this policy.

19+ Bursary

Eligible Groups:

- Learners aged 19+ funding their Course Fees with an Advanced Learner Loan.
- Learners aged 19+ studying a course at a Centre with Devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) Funding available for their course.

Criteria

Free Meals:

Learners/Parents/Guardians must be in receipt of one of the below:

- Income Support (IS)
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- State Pension Credit or Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit 'Run on' (paid 4 weeks after qualification for Working Tax Credit stopped)
- Universal Credit (UC)- Household income outside of UC payments must not exceed £7,400 annually.

Travel:

Learners/Parents/Guardians must meet the below:

- Household income (whether through salary or benefits) must be below £40,000.
- Parents/Guardians/Learners must be in receipt of any of the low-income state benefits that are listed here: <https://www.litrg.org.uk/tax-guides/tax-credits-and-benefits/state-benefits>
- If parents/ guardians are not in receipt of benefits, then we can accept a P60 or payslips from the last 3 months.

Vulnerable:

Learners must meet one or more of the below criteria:

- Are in Care:
 - Classed as in care for the purposes of the Bursary if the Learner is under Section 20 or Section 31 of the Children Act 1989.
 - Learners placed with a Foster Carer by their Local Authority are classed as in Care for the purposes of the Bursary.
 - Learners in Private Fostering arrangements are not eligible.
- Are a Care Leaver:
 - A young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16.
 - Or a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16
- Are in receipt of Universal Credit or Income Support in their own name.
- Are in receipt of Employment Support Allowance & Disability Living Allowance in their own name.
- Are in receipt of Universal Credit & Disability Living Allowance in their own name
- Are in receipt of Employment Support Allowance & Personal Independent Payments in their own name.

Residential:

Learners must meet the below criteria:

- Have a fully approved Advanced Learner Loan.
- Must not have moved specifically for the course if the same, or a similar course, was available at a College more local to their home.
- Must not be in receipt of Housing Benefit.
- Must be in receipt of a low Income Benefit - <https://www.litrg.org.uk/tax-guides/tax-credits-and-benefits/state-benefits> .
- Must be able to prove one or both of the following:
 - Travel to the College would take either 2+ hours each way or cost £100+ per week.

- Must not submit an application for a rented property that they are already living in as of the point of enrolment or their Parents/Guardians home if living with Parents/Guardians.
- Must not be living in the home of a Friend or Family member..
- Must be able to provide a copy of their Tenancy Agreement or Contract.
- Must provide their Landlord/Rental Agencies Contact Details.
- Bursary Funds will be capped at either 75% of the Total Rent Cost or £1,200 per term (whichever is the lesser value).

Childcare:

- Learners under the age of 20 can apply directly for funds to cover Childcare Costs whilst in Education via the Care to Learn Scheme- <https://studentbursary.education.gov.uk/w/webpage/student-bursary>
- Learners aged over 20 can apply for costs to cover Childcare through the College and must meet the below criteria:
 - Must be in receipt of a Low Income Benefit - <https://www.litrg.org.uk/tax-guides/tax-credits-and-benefits/state-benefits>
 - The Childcare Provider must be Ofsted Registered and the Registration Number provided
 - The Childcare Provider must agree to accept payments directly from the College.

Payments

Bursaries awarded by The College are entirely cashless. Where possible we will make Payments in Kind through the use of Vouchers, Equipment purchased on a Learners behalf etc. Where this is not possible payments will be made on the First Monday of each Month of the Academic Year (September-June) unless the Monday is a Bank Holiday. In this situation we will make the payment on the preceding Friday.

- Payments will be made via BACS.
- Payments must be made into the Learners own Bank Account; we cannot make payments into a Third Party account unless there are extenuating circumstances that have been agreed with the Bursary Team.
- Payments must be made into a Bank Account which utilises an 8 digit account code. Our systems cannot make payments into Accounts with a 9 digit Account Number.
- Account details provided must be for a Bank Account not a Building Society, Post Office or Savings Account.

Free Meals:

Capped at £57 per month and to be used only for the purchase of Meals on days that the learner is attending College.

Travel:

Where possible Learners will be provided with the funds to purchase either a Monthly or Termly travel ticket to attend College. We will also reimburse the cost of any required discount cards i.e., Student Rail Card, to reduce the costs of travel. If the Town or City where the learner lives already has a Free travel programme in place for Young People, we would expect the learner to first apply for this before applying for the Bursary.

Vulnerable:

The Vulnerable Bursary is capped at £1,200 and Learners are not guaranteed to receive the full £1,200 as it is assessed and awarded based on the Learner's individual circumstances and requirements.

Residential:

Paid directly to the Learners Landlord/Rental Agency as per their schedule. Payments cannot be made to the Learner.

Childcare:

Paid directly to the Childcare Provider as per their schedule. Payments cannot be made to the Learner. Childcare costs will only be covered for the days the Learner is in college.

Equipment:

Any equipment purchased for Learners must be returned to the College when the Learner completes their course.

Kit:

Any kit needed for the Learners course is capped at £185 for the year.

Trips:

Payments will be made directly to the Learner's College. The Bursary Team will assess the contribution to be made from Bursary Funds based upon the Learners Household Income and Circumstances.

Industry Placements:

Learners required to complete an Industry Placement as part of their course can submit receipts to have extra costs as a result of their placement reimbursed. No costs can be reimbursed without receipts.

Conditions of Award

The College reserves the right to withhold payments at any time if a Learner fails to meet the college code of conduct.

- Learners are expected to attend all of their timetabled sessions. Attendance will be checked regularly and overall attendance below 85% may result in payments being stopped until the Learners attendance improves.
- If a Learner withdraws from the course, support will cease immediately.
- Learners must inform us of any change in circumstance while on the course.
- Learners must declare to their benefit providers (where required) if they are awarded any support
- Bursary funds must only be used for the purpose for which they are intended i.e. Meals payments for meals, travel payments for bus & train tickets. Misuse of Bursary funds will result in the cancellation of further payments.

From a Bursary perspective any type of absence whether Authorised or Non-Authorised counts as an absence as this is a day that the Learner has received ESFA funds to attend College. Therefore The College regularly checks in to ascertain whether Learners are still meeting the required thresholds to continue to receive these funds. The College cannot pay out ESFA funds for Non-Attendance but will always take individual circumstances into account before stopping any further payments.

Repayment

The College reserve the right to request that Bursary Funds are returned or repaid if the Learners Bursary is stopped as a result of a breach of the above Conditions of Award or any of the below circumstances:

- If a Learner, or Learners Parent/Guardian, has knowingly provided incorrect, false or inaccurate information regarding the Households Financial position to meet Bursary eligibility criteria
- If a Learner has knowingly used Bursary Funds awarded to them for anything other than their intended purpose.

- If any Equipment purchased through Bursary funds is damaged or stolen through misuse or neglect on the part of the Learner then the Learner is liable to cover the cost of replacement items.
- If Equipment purchased through Bursary Funds is not returned by the Learner when they complete their studies they will be liable to cover the cost of the item purchased for them.
- If a Learner has committed a serious breach, or repeated breaches of discipline, that leads to their expulsion then the Learner may be liable to repay any funds awarded to them for that Academic Year.

Appeals & Complaints

If a Learners application for Bursary Funding is rejected or a particular element of the Bursary application rejected, they can appeal the decision made but must provide their appeal in writing to

Bursary.support@accesstomusic.ac.uk explaining the reason for appeal along with any new supporting evidence.

The application form will be reassessed using the new evidence provided by the Bursary Team. The decision made after review of the appeal and new evidence is the final decision and cannot be appealed again with the Bursary Team.

Learners may submit a formal complaint if dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal to Ccc.admin@accesstomusic.ac.uk. The CCC Administrator will send an acknowledgement within 5 working days of the complaint and subject to Staff Annual Leave, National Holidays etc will endeavour to respond and resolve the complaint within 15 working days. This decision is final.