



Learner Bursary Guidance

16-19 (inc. 19+ EHCP learners) 2025-26



Overview

16-19 (inc. 19+ EHCP learners) Bursary

- To be eligible for help from the 16-19 bursary fund in the 2025 to 2026 academic year, you must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025.
- If you are aged 19 or over, you are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if you are continuing on a study programme that you began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.
- If approved before the start of the academic year, Progressors and Returners will be paid the Friday before the start of term and new learners will be paid Friday of the first week or thereafter, once your application has been approved.
- New and returning learners **MUST** be able to fund travel and meals themselves until they are approved for Bursary Support. Where eligible learners will be reimbursed from receipt of their application.



Contacts

Please direct all queries to
Bursary.Support@accesstomusic.ac.uk The Inbox is monitored
by Jade McEwan as the Bursary Support Team. The department
is managed by Jan Lansdell who is Access Creative College's
Head of Funding & Compliance.



Bank Accounts

To receive your Bursary payments, you must have your own bank account; this must be a current account (not a savings or Post Office account or similar). If there is a reason as to why you cannot have your own bank account, we will require signed authority confirming your agreement to payments being made to a third party of your choice. If the latter is applicable, please make this known as early as possible.



Bursary Types

Listed below are the types of Bursary you can apply for if you are eligible for the 16–19 (inc. 19+ EHCP learners) Bursary:

- Travel
- Meals
- Vulnerable
- Childcare
- Trips (as required for your course.) If a trip has been approved, your Centre will keep you updated as to what Bursary Support may be available.
- Essential Course materials and equipment (as required for your course). Kit Reimbursement required for Access Sport and SGA Academy is to be purchased through your Centre or approved by your tutor beforehand.



16-19 (inc. 19+ EHCP learners) Meals Bursary

Meals are capped at £4 per day (Only for timetables college days attended)

Criteria for the 16-19 Meals Bursary are as follows:

- Learners/Parents/Guardians must be in receipt of one of the below:
 - Income Support (IS)
 - Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
 - Income related Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190.00, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).
 - Working Tax Credit 'Run on' - paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit. Working Tax Credit is not a qualifying benefit for Free Meals and a parent or student in receipt of Working Tax Credits is not entitled to a Free Meal (this is a common question sent to ESFA).
 - Universal Credit (UC)- with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400.00 for each year (after tax and including any benefits they get).

Free Meal Funding is available for all eligible students for each day the student attends their study programme, where this is appropriate.



16-19 (inc. 19+ EHCP learners) Travel Bursary

Travel is capped at £2,000 per annum (exceptions to be reviewed individually)

Criteria for the 16-19 Travel bursary is below:

- Household income (whether through salary or benefits) must be below £40,000.
- We can accept any of the low-income state benefits that are listed here in either your own name, or your Parent/Guardian's name if you live in the same household and they are supporting you financially:
<https://www.litrg.org.uk/tax-guides/tax-credits-and-benefits/state-benefits>
- If you live in the same household as your Parents/Guardians and they are supporting you financially, then we can accept a P60 or payslips covering the 3 months prior to application in their name.
- All evidence of state benefit letters, apart from Tax Credits, must be dated from April 2024 or later.
- You must provide your exact travel route & company so that we can calculate your travel costs.
- If you travel by train Access Creative College will also reimburse you for the cost of a Rail Card to further reduce your travel costs.
- Please be advised that if you are aged 16-17 and living in Manchester you may not be eligible for the travel bursary due to the free bus travel provided through the Our Pass scheme: <https://ourpass.co.uk/get-our-pass/>
- Please be advised that if you are aged 16-17 and living in London you may not be eligible for the travel bursary due to the free bus travel available throughout London: <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/16-plus-zip-oyster-photo-card>



16-18 Vulnerable Bursary

This is only available to learners aged under 19 as of 31/08/2025 unless continuing a course that started when aged under 19. Learners over 19 with an EHCP are not eligible.

The criteria for the 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary is below. One or more must apply and benefit/income evidence must not be dated prior to April 2025.

- You are in Care.
 - Children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989). Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.
- You 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
 - Only students who meet this definition are eligible if they have a financial need.
- A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as looked after. They meet the criteria for the 'in care' vulnerable group where they need financial support to participate.
- A child who is privately fostered (in other words, a private arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child) is not classed as a looked after child and is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.
- You are in receipt of Universal Credit or Income Support in your own name.
- You are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) **OR** Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in your own name **AND** Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC).



16-18 Vulnerable Bursary Continued

- If you are in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit (in your own name) and you are living with a partner that is dependent on you, you will need to provide a copy of each of the below evidence:
 - Income Support or Universal credit letter dated April 2025 or later that confirms you are allowed to be in education or training.
 - A current signed tenancy agreement in your own name.
 - A recent utility bill in your own name.
- If you are in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit (in your own name) and you are living with a child that is dependent on you, you will need to provide a copy of each of the below evidence:
 - Income Support or Universal credit letter dated April 2025 or later, which must be in your own name and must confirm you are allowed to be in education or training.
 - A signed tenancy agreement in your own name.
 - A recent utility bill in your own name.
 - A child benefit receipt.
 - Your child's birth certificate.



Childcare

If you are aged 16-19 and need support with Childcare Costs whilst studying you can apply via the Care to Learn Scheme, further details around eligibility requirements can be found on the Care to Learner website at <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

Care to learn is only available to learners aged under 20 at the start of their course and can support with the below:

- your childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare taster session for up to 5 days
- keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking your child to their childcare provider

You can receive up to the below amounts which would be paid directly to your Childcare Provider:

- £160 per child per week if you live outside London
- £175 per child per week if you live in London



Appeals & Complaints

If you are not eligible for bursary funding or a particular element of the bursary and feel that this decision is wrong you can appeal the decision made but must provide your appeal in writing to Bursary.support@accesscreative.ac.uk explaining the reason for your appeal and new supporting evidence must be provided.

- The application form will then be re-assessed using the new evidence provided.
- The decision made in your appeal is the final decision and cannot be appealed again.
- If you wish to lodge a formal complaint after the appeals process, please contact ccc.admin@accesscreative.ac.uk
- The Quality Team will review and work with the Bursary Team for a resolution.