



100+ YEARS
TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Oaklands College Bursary Policy 2024-2025

July 2024

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Oaklands College Bursary Funds 2024-2025

1. Policy Introduction

Government Guidance from ESFA on bursary fund can be found:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year>

Oaklands College is committed to providing inclusive and equitable educational opportunities for all students. Recognising the financial barriers that can impede access to Further Education, we have established a comprehensive bursary policy designed to support students who require financial assistance. Our bursary aims to ensure that no student is denied the opportunity to pursue their educational aspirations due to financial constraints. By offering targeted financial support, we strive to create an environment where all students can thrive and achieve their full potential. This policy outlines the eligibility criteria, awards that are available and the conditions of payment.

COLLEGE THRESHOLD: Students and combined household income must be below £29,250 (Tier 1) to qualify for bursary fund. A lower threshold of £23,500 (Tier 2) will be considered for a higher bursary award towards essential kit fees/trips.

If a student is awarded 'cash' rather than 'in kind' payments, the money is to be paid directly into the students' bank account, unless parents or carers have an appointee letter of finance showing the student and the parent/carer full details. This must be provided as part of evidence for the bursary for payments to be made.

Evidence must have the parent/carer or students full name and address listed as proof of the income.

An application can take up to 8 weeks to process. Funds will not be available at the start of the academic year for most applications. Students must take responsibility for providing all information in a timely manner.

Bursaries can be applied for at any time during the academic year, bursary entitlement will only start at the day of the application approval.

2. Strategic Plan Objective and Themes Links

It links with Strategic Plan Objective of Inclusive, thriving community as it aims to promote inclusion and overcome financial barriers to learning. It also links with the themes of Happiness and Wellbeing and Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity to promote attendance and retention of students by removing financial barriers.

3. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all students.

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4. Monitoring Impact

Outcomes for students in receipt of Bursary funds will be monitored as part of our EDI monitoring and reporting. This will fall to the EDI committee.

5. 16-18 Bursary – 2 categories

Group A - 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary

Group B - 16-18 Discretionary Bursary

6. Group A - Vulnerable Bursary (for students aged 16-18)

- 6.1 Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined group reflects that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate on their study programme.
- 6.2 Students in the vulnerable learners' group (including care experienced students) should not be regarded as automatically entitled to the full £1200 of support over the academic year, and that they too will need an individual assessment of financial need and should only receive the amount they need to participate.
- 6.3 The college may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need. This might be because their financial needs are already met and/or because they have no relevant costs. The College can refuse a student's application on this basis. If there is no evidence of financial need and student/parent/carer still wants to be assessed for bursary, the Bursary Manager will consider if a reduced amount could be awarded (because the financial help needed is limited).
- 6.4 Criteria for Vulnerable Bursary:
- Student is receiving Universal Credit/Income Support in their own name, because they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner.
 - Disabled young person in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) and who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)/Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – Full household income must also be taken into account.
 - Children Looked After (in care), including unaccompanied asylum seekers.
 - Young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including an independent fostering agency
 - Young People who are 'Care Leavers' - A Young Person qualifies as a Care Leaver under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 if they have been in the care of Hertfordshire County Council or other local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by Hertfordshire County Council or another local authority at school-leaving age or after that date.

6.5 Evidence to be provided for assessment:

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A student in receipt of Universal Credit in their own right must provide 3 of the most recent Universal Credit statements in full AND one of the following:

- Tenancy agreement in the student's name, or utility bill in the student's name
- If they are a parent. Proof of Child Benefit, or Children's birth certificate

6.6 Virtual School: Looked After Children and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (Under 19 yrs)

- Virtual School must support students with materials fees and related course costs. There are no fees for students under 18. Oaklands College acknowledges other local authorities may have differing ways of awarding their funds. The Care Experienced Coordinator will ensure the multi-agency work takes place to meet the needs of all Care Experienced Students.
- Virtual School support the student application, by providing letter evidence to demonstrate the young person is care experienced, and demonstrate the young person's financial needs to access vulnerable bursary to prevent barrier to education.

6.7 Allocation of 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary funds:

- Students may receive up to £33 per week, starting 9th September 2024, paid every Friday, linked to regular attendance above 90% (pro rata for courses lasting less than 30 weeks). Payments are made a week in advance based on the previous weeks' attendance being above 90%, payments are not made in college holidays.
- Additional Travel may be made available when it is assessed that travel costs could be a barrier to attendance. This could be in the form of a free bus pass. This will be allocated from DISCRETIONARY bursary. If they are a Virtual School student, contact your Virtual School Advisor who can support with additional travel support.

7. Group B - 16-18 Discretionary Bursary

Discretionary Bursary is awarded under a two-tier system, households with an income of below £29,250 (Tier 1) will be awarded bursary, households with an income below £23,500 (Tier 2) will be awarded a higher rate of bursary accordingly.

7.1 Evidence to be provided for assessment:

Applicants will need to provide evidence, as below, of total household income.

- Income support
- Universal credit
- Employment Support Allowance
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Pension Credit Guarantee
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit (excluding single person allowance).
- 3 recent payslips for all household earners.
- Provisional Tax credit award letters valid for initial award but confirmed tax credit award letter must be received by 1st December 2024, for payments to continue from that date.

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7.2 Eligibility:

- Students aged 16-18 that meet the criteria above.
- Students aged 19 or over can receive discretionary 16-18 bursary if they are continuing on a programme they began aged 16-18 (19+ continuers – this must be the same course they started before turning 19) or have an EHCP. Students must be placed on the 16-18 discretionary bursary award and not 19+ in these instances.
- Asylum Seekers (accompanied) must **not** be given 'cash'. **If they have been refused asylum no bursary can be awarded.**
- HE students, apprentices and WBL are NOT eligible – contact the bursary team for further information.

7.3 Allocation of 16- 18 Discretionary Bursary Funds:

- Maximum of 50% towards essential equipment/kit. 50% (Tier 2) or 30% (Tier 1). Students are expected to purchase their equipment/kit in order to start their study programme, bursary will reimburse the awarded amount upon receipt being provided to the bursary team. Items purchased by students need to be a low to average price for the 50%/30% of the cost to be awarded.
- Support toward travel costs, if barrier to attendance and engagement, this could be in the form of a bus pass. The bus pass will only be issued to **students expected to attend 3 or more days a week**. Travel bursary will only be considered for students that live more than 2 miles from the campus they are based at.
- Students who are aged 18 and under, living in Herts who travel by bus are expected to have a Herts SaverCard if not using the bus pass. This is NOT required if a Direct Debit is set up with Arriva.
- Monthly Travel payments are paid during 1st week of each month. All payments are made on the condition of the student having 90% attendance or above for the previous month.
- Maximum of 50% of trip costs that are linked to essential curriculum or college activities (excluding spending money). UK based trips only. Trip must be compulsory for the student to complete their study programme.
- UCAS fee to be paid for UCAS applications

7.4 16 to 19 Bursary Fund and receipt of DWP benefits

- Receipt of bursary funding does not affect receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, such as Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

8. Residential Students (16-18):

- Residential fees 2024-2025 for returning students is £7164, the fee for new residential students is £7884. Residential Students can apply for Residential Meal reduction of which £1861.50 is reduced from residential fees
- Residential Students are NOT awarded travel bursary, parents should provide any travelling costs.

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9. Government Free Meal Scheme:

9.1 Student eligibility:

- Students must be aged between 16-18 on 31st August 2024 to be eligible.
- Returning students who turn 19 during their study programme will be eligible until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 or to the end of their study programme, whichever is sooner.
- Students who meet the below criteria regarding household income, and have an EHCP, are eligible for Government Free Meals up to the age of 25.
- Apprentices are not eligible for Free Government meals including those with an EHCP.

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. Free meals in further education defines disadvantage as students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and 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, 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.
- Universal Credit- with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 for each year.

9.2 Assessing Universal Credit for Free School Meals (FSM):

- Department for Education suggests college asks for the 3 most recent monthly award statements in full to include the take-home pay figure in addition to the amount of Universal Credit.
- If monthly net income does not exceed £616.67 (annual income of £7,400) the student is eligible for free meals.
- Anyone exceeding this and the yearly income above £7,400 then the student is not eligible for free meals.

Institutions must make free meals provision for students on days when they are off-site as part of their study programme, for instance attending a work placement, work experience or industry placement. This will be reimbursed to students upon presentation of receipt for a meal up to the cost of £4.25.

10. 16-18 Oaklands emergency funding

- Any student who finds themselves in a temporary situation which is of a personal urgency or are experiencing a change of circumstances. Award is discretionary and based on individual basis.
- Any award will need to be approved and signed off by Bursary Manager.

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- No more than 2 months exceptional circumstances funding should be awarded. Need can be reassessed after this period.

11. 19+ Adult Bursary

Students on Non-Funded Courses/Work Based Learning and Higher Education Study Programmes are not entitled to bursary.

19+ Bursary is awarded under a two-tier system, households with an income of below £29250 (Tier 1) will be awarded bursary, households with an income below £23500 (Tier 2) will be awarded a higher rate of bursary accordingly.

If student is married or living with a partner the college will assess joint income.

11.1 Qualifying benefits are as follows:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and 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, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Provisional Tax credit award letters valid for initial award, but confirmed tax credit award letter must be received by 1st December 2024 for payments to continue from that date.

11.2 Allocation of 19+ Bursary Funds:

- Maximum of 50% of trip costs that are linked to essential curriculum or college activities (excluding spending money). UK based trips only. Trip must be compulsory for the student to achieve their study programme.
- Maximum of 50% essential equipment/kit. 50% (Tier 2) or 30% (Tier 1). Students are expected to purchase their equipment/kit in order to start their study programme, bursary will reimburse the awarded amount upon receipt being provided to the bursary team. Items purchased by students need to be a low to average price for the 50%/30% of the cost to be awarded.
- Support toward travel costs, if barrier to attendance and engagement, could be in the form of a bus pass. The bus pass will only be issued to **students expected to attend 3 or more days a week**. Travel bursary will only be considered for students that live more than 2 miles from the campus they are based at.
- College Registration, Exam Fees and UCAS Fees

11.2 19+ Emergency funding:

- Any student who finds themselves in a temporary situation which is of a personal urgency or are experiencing a change of circumstances. Award is discretionary and based on individual basis.
- Any award will need to be approved and signed off by the Bursary Manager.

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- No more than 2 months exceptional circumstances funding should be awarded. Need can be reassessed after this period.

12. Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Fund

The bursary fund is for students aged 19+ on a level 3 or above study programme, who have an **approved** Advanced Learner Loan. If loan is not approved there is no eligibility. Full household income or less than £29,250 to be eligible.

Please note: Books, equipment, Materials and Kit will all be part of the advanced learner loan and should NOT be paid out of the bursary.

The advanced learner loan bursary includes support with the following:

- Maximum of 50% of trip costs paid that are linked to essential curriculum or college activities (excluding spending money). UK based trips only. Trip must be compulsory for the student to achieve their qualification. This, however, should be covered by the advanced learner loan the student takes out (fees agreed by Directors of Curriculum).
- Support toward travel costs, if barrier to attendance and engagement, could be in the form of a bus pass. The bus pass will only be issued to **students expected to attend 3 or more days a week**. Travel bursary will only be considered for students that live more than 2 miles from the campus they are based at.

13. 20+ Childcare in FE

Students who are under 19 need to apply for childcare support through the Government Care to Learn programme, <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn> Support can be obtained from the Bursary team.

Childcare costs are provided to students who are at risk of not participating or remaining in learning as a result of barriers to accessing childcare provision.

13.1 Applying for Bursary

Students must complete the childcare application form in full, and provide the following documents to be considered for the childcare bursary award:

- Benefit evidence from the list below, this must be dated within 3 months of the course start date.
- Child or children's birth certificates or passport.
- The childcare provider's details must be filled out on the form with their contact details. All payments are paid directly to the student and the student must be liable for paying the invoice provided by the childcare provider. Provider must be Ofsted registered. Each invoice must be provided to the Bursary team for payment to be made.
- Copy of childcare provider fees/ hourly rate.

13.2 Qualifying benefits are as follows:

- Income support;
- Universal Credit
- Working tax credit

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- Employment Support Allowance (work related);
- Job Seekers Allowance;
- Pension Credit Guarantee;
- Housing Benefit;
- Council Tax Benefit (excluding single person allowance).

Please note following information:

- The childcare Bursary will pay for childcare whilst the student is attending college. Childcare bursary is paid term time only.
- The maximum award is £9,000 per child during an academic year.
- Students must use their Government free hours and any childcare vouchers for childcare. If a course ends earlier than that scheduled end of the academic year (e.g. Access) payments will not continue past this date.

14. Apprenticeship Care Leaver Bursary

The apprenticeship care leavers' bursary is a payment for an eligible apprentice who is a care leaver, to help remove barriers to accessing the apprenticeship. The Care Experienced Coordinator will support the application.

14.1 Payment of the bursary

- The bursary is paid by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to an apprenticeship training provider, where the apprentice remains on the apprenticeship for at least 60 days. The provider passes it on to the apprentice in a single payment within 30 days of receiving it, unless ESFA provide confirmation in writing that a longer period is acceptable.
- The care leavers' bursary is a single payment of £1,000, and an individual care leaver can only receive it once.

14.2 Eligibility Criteria, apprentice must be either:

- an eligible child – a young person who is 16 or 17 and who has been looked after by a UK local authority or health and social care trust for at least a period of 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still looked after
- a relevant child – a young person who is 16 or 17 who has left care within the UK after their 16th birthday and before leaving care was an eligible child
- a former relevant child – a young person who is aged between 18 and 21 (up to their 25th birthday if they are in education or training) who, before turning 18, was either an eligible or a relevant child
- They must have begun their apprenticeship on or after 1 August 2024, and must not have received the care leavers' bursary before.

Evidence needed:

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- Proof of care leaver status from local authority/Virtual Schools
- Be enrolled as an apprentice
- Apprentice will sign they are happy for the employer to be aware of their leaving care status and sign they have been awarded and received the one-off payment.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-bursary-for-care-leavers/apprenticeships-care-leavers-bursary-policy-summary>

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