



Education
Funding
Agency

The 16-19 Bursary Fund: your questions answered

**Advice for young people
April 2013**

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The 16-19 Bursary Fund

1. What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund?

The Government has set aside some money for schools, colleges, training providers and local authorities to allocate to young people who need financial support to stay on in further education or training. This is called the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

It could help you with any education-related costs that may arise during the school year, including essentials like a meal during the day or transport to your school, college or training provider. Or you might need extra help to buy books, clothing or equipment for your course, or pay for educational visits.

2. Who can apply?

To apply for a bursary, you must be at least 16 years old and under 19 years old at the start of the 2013/14 academic year (in 2013/14 this is the 31st August). You must also be taking part in full-time or part-time further education or training.

3. How much will I get?

There are two types of bursaries:

Vulnerable student bursary – you could receive up to £1,200 if you:

- are in local authority care or you have recently left local authority care; or
- receive Income Support or Universal Credit (a new benefit which will replace Income Support) in your own name; or
- are disabled and receive both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments (a new benefit which will replace Disability Living Allowance) in your own name.

Discretionary bursary – You can apply for a discretionary bursary if you aren't eligible for a vulnerable bursary but you need financial help to stay on in further education or training. Your school, college or training provider will decide whether you will receive a discretionary bursary, how much you could get, and what it should be used for.

General information

4. How do I apply?

You will need to apply to your school, college or training provider. Your tutor, or your school, college or training provider's student support services will be able to tell you what you need to do. You can also look for information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund on your school, college or training provider's website.

5. Who else can give me advice?

Your school, college or training provider's student support services, or your tutor, will be the best people to speak to; but your parents or carers, or key adults like a social worker or a local authority careers adviser might also be able to help you with your application.

6. When should I apply?

You should make an application as soon as you have decided where you are going to study. The sooner you apply, the sooner you will start to receive support.

7. I am studying part-time. Can I apply?

Yes; schools, colleges and training providers can consider applications from full-time and part-time students.

8. I am doing a correspondence course with my local college. Can I apply for a bursary?

If you are doing a correspondence course (sometimes called distance or remote learning), and you either belong to one of the vulnerable groups, or you meet with your school, college or training provider's eligibility criteria for discretionary bursaries, you might be able to apply for a bursary. However, you will probably not receive the full amount, or you may not receive a bursary at all if you do not have any education-related costs. If you want to apply, you should speak to your school, college or training provider's student support services first. They will consider your individual circumstances – like how often you have to attend and whether you need to buy any equipment for your course. After they have done this they will be able to let you know whether you can apply and how much support you will receive.

9. How will my bursary be paid?

How your bursary is paid to you will depend on your school, college or training provider. It might be paid into your bank account, in lump sums or in instalments during your course. You may also be given a cheque or cash. It might also be paid to you 'in kind', which means that instead of receiving money, you could get a public transport travel pass, free meals or course equipment. Or you might receive part of your bursary in money and part of it 'in kind'.

10. I don't have a bank account - does this mean I can't get a bursary?

No, you should still be able to receive a bursary. Speak to your school, college or training provider to work out an alternative way for them to pay you.

11. I am studying for a Higher Education qualification - can I apply for a bursary?

No, the 16-19 Bursary Fund is for students in further education or training only. Information about financial help for students in higher education can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

12. I go to an independent (private) school - can I apply for a bursary?

You will not normally be able to apply for a bursary if you go to an independent school or college that charges fees. However, if you have been referred to this kind of school or college by your local authority and your local authority is paying your fees, you may be able to apply for a bursary. Your school or college will be able to let you know whether you can apply and what to do next.

13. I am doing an Apprenticeship. Can I apply for a bursary?

If you are being paid on your Apprenticeship, you can't apply for a bursary. If you're on an Access to Apprenticeship programme, or if you're an un-waged Apprentice, you can apply.

14. Can my college tell me what to spend my bursary on?

Yes, your bursary is to help pay for things you really need to stay on at a school, college or training provider. They can insist that your bursary is spent on travel costs, meals during the day, or equipment for your course.

15. Can my college stop my payments if I don't attend or if I misbehave?

Yes, your school, college or training provider will almost certainly set conditions on your bursary - these are rules that you will need to stick to, such as attending classes regularly or behaving well. If you don't stick to these conditions, your school, college or training provider can stop your payments.

16. If I can't attend college because of illness or an authorised absence will I still receive my bursary?

If you are ill or have been allowed an authorised absence, your school, college or training provider will let you know whether this will affect your bursary payments.

17. I got a bursary last year - do I need to apply again this year?

This will depend on your school, college or training provider. Some will ask for a new application every year and some will only ask for an application at the beginning of a course. If you are in any doubt, contact your school, college or training provider.

18. Will everyone know that I am getting a bursary?

Your school, college or training provider should make sure that you are not singled out in any way and that your application is handled confidentially. If you are worried, speak to your school, college or training provider before making an application.

19. I think that another student may have made a fraudulent claim for a bursary. What should I do?

Your school, college or training provider will need to investigate this. If you have any concerns, you should speak to your tutor, or your school, college or training provider's student support services in confidence.

20. I don't think that my college is administering the 16-19 Bursary Fund correctly – how do I complain?

You should first of all speak to your school, college or training provider's student support services and try to resolve your concerns with them. If they are unable to help, you can make a formal complaint on any subject, including the 16-19 Bursary Fund, by using your school, college or training provider's formal complaints procedure.

21. I was eligible for a bursary last academic year but now my college is telling me that I'm too old to apply. Can I apply for a bursary?

To apply for a bursary, you must be over 16 years old and under 19 years old at the start of the 2013/14 academic year (this year, the academic year starts on 31st August 2013). If your nineteenth birthday was before then, you cannot apply for a bursary. There is financial support available for older students - information on this is available from: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance>. Your school, college or training provider's student support services will be able to let you know what you can apply for.

22. Can I get any other financial support to attend college?

Your local authority may provide free or subsidised public transport to get you to school or college. You can find out what is available in your area at: <https://www.gov.uk/subsidised-college-transport-16-19>

The Government also provides other financial support for certain specific groups of young people in further education and training. You can get more information from: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/find-course>

Vulnerable bursaries

23. Can I apply for a vulnerable student bursary?

You can apply for a vulnerable bursary if you:

- are in local authority care; or you have recently left local authority care (are a Care Leaver); or
- receive Income Support or Universal Credit¹ in your own name; or

¹ Universal Credit is a new benefit that will, over the next few years, replace Income Support and Employment Support Allowance. If you are receiving Universal Credit in your own name, you can apply for a vulnerable bursary. More information on Universal Credit is available from: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/universal-credit/>.

- are disabled and receive both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments² in your own name.

24. Am I guaranteed the full £1,200?

Not necessarily. You should receive £1,200 if you are studying for a minimum of 30 weeks on a full-time course. But, if your course is for less than 30 weeks, or even if your course lasts for 30 weeks but you only study for a few hours a week, you'll probably receive less than £1,200. If you do not have any education-related costs, for example if you are a residential student who doesn't need to travel to college, and you have all of your meals and equipment provided, your school, college or training provider could decide that you will receive less than £1,200 or even not receive a bursary at all.

25. Do I need to prove to my college that I am entitled to a vulnerable bursary?

Yes, your school, college or training provider will need to see evidence that proves you are eligible for a vulnerable bursary. This could be a letter from your local authority confirming you're in care or have been in care; or a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions confirming the types of benefits you're receiving. Your school, college or training provider will tell you what's needed.

26. Do I need to be receiving the benefits in my own name?

Yes, you must be receiving the specified benefits yourself to be eligible for a vulnerable bursary. If not, you are not entitled to a vulnerable bursary, but you might still be able to apply for a discretionary bursary.

27. I am receiving Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments. Can I apply for a vulnerable bursary?

Only if you also receive Employment Support Allowance as well - to qualify for a vulnerable bursary you must receive both benefits. If you don't receive both benefits, you can apply for a discretionary bursary.

28. There have recently been changes to Employment Support Allowance. Does this mean that I am no longer entitled to a vulnerable bursary?

No; as long as you continue to receive both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments you can still apply for a vulnerable bursary. If you don't receive both benefits, you aren't eligible for a vulnerable bursary (unless of course you qualify by being in one of the other vulnerable groups). However, you can apply for a discretionary bursary.

² Personal Independence Payments (sometimes called PIP) is a new benefit that will, over the next few years, replace Disability Living Allowance. If you are receiving PIP and Employment Support Allowance in your own name, you can apply for a vulnerable bursary. More information on PIP is available from: <https://www.gov.uk/pip>

29. I am looking after a disabled relative. As a young carer am I entitled to a vulnerable bursary?

As a young carer you're not entitled to a vulnerable bursary, but you can still apply for a discretionary bursary.

30. I am a young parent. Am I entitled to a vulnerable bursary?

Not unless you are living away from your parents and receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in your own name. If not, you can apply for a discretionary bursary. You might also get help with childcare costs through the Government's Care to Learn scheme. More information about Care to Learn is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

Discretionary bursaries

31. Can I apply for a discretionary bursary?

You can apply for a discretionary bursary if you are aged between 16 and 19 and in full-time or part-time further education or training.

32. Who will decide whether or not I get a discretionary bursary?

The decision will be made by your school, college or training provider, which will have its own eligibility criteria. This simply means the things they will consider when deciding who gets bursaries. Schools, colleges or training providers have to set eligibility criteria because they only have a limited amount of funding, and they need to make sure it gets to the students who most need financial help to stay on in further education or training. The eligibility criteria might be based on your family's income, whether your parents receive benefits, or whether you've previously been entitled to free school meals. Before you apply for a discretionary bursary, you will need to find out what your school, college or training provider's eligibility criteria are, and decide whether you are likely to be eligible.

33. How much will I get?

This will depend on your school, college or training provider. They can decide who receives a discretionary bursary, how much they will receive and what it should be spent on.

34. If I apply for a discretionary bursary will my college investigate my family's finances?

If you apply for a discretionary bursary, your school, college or training provider will probably ask for some evidence of your family's income, such as a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions confirming your family's benefits, a P60, a Tax Credit Award Notice, or evidence of your family's annual income if they are self-employed.

35. Can I get help to pay for 'one-off' things like educational trips or a train ticket to attend a university interview?

Some schools, colleges and training providers do offer 'one-off' discretionary payments as well as longer-term discretionary bursaries. Ask your school, college or training provider for more information.

36. My college gave me a discretionary bursary when I started my course, but since then my circumstances have changed, and I now need more support. Can I ask for more than one discretionary bursary in a year?

Some schools, colleges or training providers put aside some of their 16-19 Bursary Fund to help students who need emergency financial help because their circumstances have changed since the start of the year. Others provide one-off support like this through separate hardship funds which are not connected to the 16-19 Bursary Fund. If you are already receiving support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund, and your circumstances change, you should speak to your tutor or your school, college or training provider's student support services straight away. They will be able to let you know what to do next.



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