

Bursary Financial Support for Further Education Students

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Version	Author	Date	Section	Changes summary
1	Julie Atkins	06/24		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meals increased from £4.00 to £4.25. • Travel increased from £230 to £270 per term (£690 to £810 per year). • Adult Education Budget (AEB) is now known as Adult Skills Funding (ASF) • ESFA closed March 2025 and their functions transferred to Department for Education (DfE). • Childcare weekly payments of up to £180 per week per child. Care to Learn administration now comes under the college.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure systems are in place to administer, record and monitor bursary funds in accordance with the regulations and guidelines laid out by funding agencies.
- Explain student eligibility criteria for College Bursary Funds.
- Meet the needs of learners and remove financial barriers to learning.

Craven College receives allocations of funding annually from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (DFE) to provide financial support for our learners. The Bursary Funds exist to help students continue with and complete their course where they would otherwise be prohibited from doing so on financial grounds. The Bursary is intended to help with the hardship needs of individual learners. Generally, awards from the Bursary will be used towards essential course related costs such as books, equipment, travel and other costs associated with living and learning.

Any learners may apply for financial support and should be aware that their application will receive consideration in accordance with the eligibility requirements as stated in this policy.

Craven College will apply the following published guidelines for the appropriate age groups and funding types, for the use of these funds:

- 16 to 18 education: free meals in further education
[Free meals in further education funded institutions guide: academic year 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-academic-year-2025-to-2026)

- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide
[16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)
- Adult Skills Fund performance and management rules
[Adult skills fund: funding rules 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)
- Advanced learner loans funding rules.
[Advanced learner loans funding and performance management rules: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

Abbreviations

ASF	Adult Skills Fund
ALLB	Advanced Learner Loans Bursary
EHCP	Education and Health Care Plan
FCM	Free College Meals
DFE	Department for Education
HE	Higher Education

1) Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the Bursary Finance Assistant is to:

- Provide information and advice to students on financial support, including free college meals and travel
- Assess applications and award support within agreed funding policy and guidance
- Understand financial support options available to students and be able to provide advice to staff on entitlements
- Record, monitor and report details of student applications and outcomes for financial assistance
- Update and maintain accurate data records of college bursary spend

The Head of Student Services:

- Ensures data is collected and recorded in line with data regulations and contractual obligations via system audit
- Will assess and approve emergency support on an individual basis and will apply discretion as appropriate and where funds allow.
- Approve outcomes for financial assistance for payment whilst ensuring compliance with the Colleges financial regulations
- Contribute to the production of management reports

The Finance Department

- Process payments directly into a student or Third-party bank account (e.g. nursery/school) by BACS
- Process internal College transfers
- Reconcile management reports

2) Objectives

Craven College will seek to ensure that the funds available are:

- Distributed fairly through a process which is transparent and easily understood.
- Assessed and allocated to each individual's need, taking in to account the financial circumstances of the applicant and the intended use of the award.
- Used to widen access to, remove financial barriers to, participation in Further Education wherever possible.

3) Communication

Craven College provides information about and promotes access to financial support via information leaflets, the college website, and at promotional events i.e. open evenings and school liaison events.

4) Implementation

Making an Application and Eligibility Assessment

Application for financial assistance from College Bursary Funds must be made via the online application portal which can be accessed from the College web portal - <https://craven.paymystudent.com/portal/>

All new full-time applicants will be sent details on applying in their enrolment instructions. Assistance with the application process, including completing the application form is available from Student Services.

Applications will be processed only from enrolled students as defined by the College and students must make their application as soon as possible. Funds are limited and will be paid on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Except for the Guaranteed Bursary and Care to Learn, all funds are means-tested and applicants will be required to provide evidence to verify total household income. All income and benefits (including housing benefit, council tax benefit, child tax credit, universal credit) are taken into account. An assessment is made based on a completed application detailing income from employment and/or benefits along with supporting evidence of all declared income.

The funding received will depend on individual circumstances. It may be necessary for students to discuss their circumstances with the Student Services Team, in order to agree a level of assistance.

Eligibility Criteria

This policy covers the learner financial support funds which are available to eligible learners. Learners who apply for any of the funds via Pay My Student will be assessed individually and awarded support based on their financial need:

- Bursaries are subject to available funds and eligibility does not guarantee entitlement to funds
- Bursary payments are subject to attendance and behaviour in line with College Policies and Procedures.
- Bursary awards cover one academic year and learners must re-apply for support on an annual basis.

To be eligible for funding from any of the bursary funds below, all students must satisfy the following criteria. Specific eligibility requirements apply to each fund.

- Residency criteria as set out by the DFE funding regulations
- Following a full time Further Education or Adult Education study programme which is funded by the DFE or an Advanced Learner Loan
- Able to demonstrate 'relative financial need' for costs that may deter them joining, continuing or completing their course. Craven College may choose to use its discretion where household income exceeds defined amounts, but it is identified that support is needed.

DFE 16-19 Bursary Fund Discretionary Bursary

Students must be:

- Aged 16-18 on 31st August 2025, or
- Aged 19 or over and continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuer), or
- Aged 19 or over with an EHCP

DFE 16-19 Bursary Fund Vulnerable Bursary

Students must be:

- Aged 16-18 on 31st August 2025, and

Be in one of the following defined vulnerable groups:

- In Care
- Care Leaver
- Receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

DFE Free College Meals

Students must be:

- Aged 16-18 on 31st August 2025, or
- Aged 19 or over and continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuer), or

- Aged 19 or over with an EHCP
- The student or their parents must be in receipt of one 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 (after tax and not including any benefits they get)

Please note Working Tax Credit is not a qualifying benefit for Free Meals.

DFE ASF Learner Support Fund

Students must be:

- Aged 19 or over on the first day of the course (20 or over for childcare funding)

DFE Advanced Learner Loans Bursary

Students must be:

- Aged 19 or over on the first day of the course and
- In receipt of Advanced Learner Loan approved by the Student Loan Company

Not Eligible

The following students are not eligible to receive any financial assistance from the College Bursary Funds:

- On a waged Apprenticeship or Higher Education programme
- Not eligible for funding (Learner Eligibility Criteria as determined by DFE)
- Self or employer-funded (e.g. paid for a course which could otherwise be funded through an Advanced Learner Loan).

What Funds May Be Used For

Funds exist to help students whose access to, or completion of education is inhibited by financial constraints or barriers. The support available will be dependent on the student's personal circumstances, study programme and method of study. Students may apply for funds to help with the following costs:

Vulnerable Student Bursary

Students in the defined vulnerable group will be entitled to a Vulnerable Student Bursary of up to £1,200 (pro-rata based on mode of attendance and length of course). Where it is assessed that the student may need extra help to remain in education, further bursary funding can be allocated from the DFE 16-19 Bursary Fund. The amount of bursary received may be less than the initial award granted as weekly payments are based on good attendance, punctuality, behaviour and progress.

Apprenticeship Bursary for Care Leavers

Apprentices, are eligible to receive a £3,000 bursary if they have been in the care of a UK local authority: A child in care is defined below:

- An eligible child – a young person who is 16 or 17 and who has been looked after by a UK local authority / 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 under the age of 25 who, before turning 18, was either an eligible or a relevant child.

Evidence of the above must be provided and retained to support an application; this must be a signed email or letter confirmation from a local authority appointed Personal Advisor confirming that the apprentice is a care leaver.

Childcare Costs

Students aged under 20 at the start of the academic year should apply for support with childcare costs through the Care to Learn scheme (<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>). Further information is available from Student Services.

Students aged 20 or over with a sole or combined household income of less than £25,000 per annum, and are the parent, guardian or main carer of compulsory school age children or under can apply for assistance with childcare costs. Childcare costs can only be considered up to a maximum of £180 per week per child. Any government funding e.g. Early Years Grant (EYG) should be used first. Payments will only be made to Ofsted registered childcare provision and will be made direct to the childcare provider by BACS each month and are dependent upon attendance. Students must provide evidence that they are the main carer for the child e.g. Birth Certificate and must not have a partner able to look after the child whilst attending College.

The award will only apply to the days / half days on which the course runs. Childcare cannot be paid during holidays or absence. Retainer and holiday cover costs cannot be covered by the fund.

Childcare applications need to be submitted via <https://craven.paymystudent.com/portal/> within 28 days of starting the course for childcare fees to be back-dated to the start of the course (including all evidence). Applications received after 28 days will only be paid for the week in which the application is received. The amount of funding available for childcare is limited and there is no guaranteed entitlement to the funds.

College Meals

Free meals to the value of £4.25 for each day that the student attends study or activity that is part of their course will be available to eligible students. Where study takes place on main site, meals will be supplied through the cafe.

Where study or activity takes place off main site, alternative arrangements are made. Free meals may also be awarded on a discretionary basis if there is a financial need.

On Aireville campus, all bursary students are eligible for a free breakfast (determined by the college) every day in attendance prior to 9.00am.

Course-Related Costs

Assessment of the level of support needed for each programme of study will be carried out in conjunction with information supplied by each Department regarding course related costs. Bursary funds may be able to assist with costs where equipment is required to enhance a student's access to learning or to increase levels of achievement. Eligibility for the bursary towards course related costs is assessed on household income of no more than £33,000 and provides help of a minimum of 50% of the cost of essential kit, equipment and uniform. Payment is made in the student's bank account by BACS once evidence of purchase has been sent to bursaries@craven-college.ac.uk. All items purchased by Bursary Funds remain the property of Craven College and must be returned if students do not complete their course.

Travel Costs

Support through bursary funds with the cost of travel is available to eligible full-time students and adults studying a qualification funded through Adult Skills Fund with full fee remission. Craven College will help towards the cost of the main journey to college based upon use of the cheapest form of travel by public transport, and up to the value of £270 per term. Travel support may also be in the form of a FREE termly bus pass. Eligibility for the bursary towards travel costs is assessed on household income of no more than £33,000.

The college will exercise discretion on its decision where another form of support is deemed more suitable or cost effective due to distance travelled. Any payments made for travel costs will be made in the student's bank account by BACS.

Students with an EHCP can apply to the Local Authority for support with travel if it is detailed within the plan. If there are any unforeseen issues with Local Authority assessments, students can apply for temporary support from the College Bursary.

Emergency Support

Under certain circumstances students may face genuine emergencies (e.g. no accommodation, unforeseen costs or charges, theft or loss of possessions or money). In these cases, students should contact the Student Services Team. Following consultation, every effort will be made to provide the financial assistance that ensures that the student can continue their studies. Under these circumstances it may not be necessary to provide evidence of family income and costs.

Capacity and Delivery Fund (Extended Work Placements)

Bursary funds will be available to support students undertaking CDF industry placements who may need to travel further to access their placements and/or incur additional costs for equipment or clothing.

5) Monitoring and review

Bursary applications and all relevant assessment and payment documentation will be kept within Pay My Student, the College's student financial support system.

The policy and operation of the procedure will be monitored and reviewed by the Student Services Manager.

6) Reporting

At least annually the Student Services Manager will prepare a Bursary Funding report to be presented at the Governors Learning and Teaching Committee and will provide:

- An overview of the financial spend against:
 - Annual allocations of funding
 - Bursary criteria
 - Number of students benefiting from the award
 - Impact on retention

7) Assessment of Impact

- Ensure systems are in place to administer, record and monitor bursary funds in accordance with the regulations and guidelines laid out by funding agencies.
- Help students continue with and complete their course where they would otherwise be prohibited from doing so on financial grounds.

8) Continuous Improvement

- An annual review of college policies and procedures to ensure their currency and ensure that procedures are being carried out.

9) Related Documentation

- Fees and Funding policy
- Complaints policy and procedure
- Attendance policy