

Guidance for young people about the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund in the 2017 to 2018 academic year.

Introduction

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is money the government has given to local authorities, schools, colleges and other education and training providers (education institutions) to give to students who need financial help to stay in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups listed below
- discretionary bursaries that institutions award to meet individual needs. For example, for transport, meals, books and equipment

Your education institution is responsible for managing both types of bursary.

Vulnerable bursary

If you are in one of the groups below, you can apply for a vulnerable bursary:

- in care
- care leaver
- getting [Income Support](#) or [Universal Credit](#) in place of Income Support in your own name
- getting [Employment Support Allowance](#) (or Universal Credit in place of ESA) and Disability Living Allowance or [Personal Independence Payments](#) in your own name

How much will I be paid if I'm eligible?

You could get up to £1,200 if you study full time for a minimum of 30 weeks. If your course is only for a few hours a week or less than 30 weeks, you will get less.

It's important to remember you won't necessarily get £1,200 if you're in one of the specific vulnerable groups. The bursary fund is designed to help you with the costs of attending your course, so if you don't have costs, for example, you're a residential student who doesn't travel, and all your meals and equipment are provided, you could get less than £1,200 or nothing at all. Your institution will consider your circumstances when you apply and will explain any decision they make to you.

Proof you're eligible for a vulnerable bursary

Your institution will need proof that you are eligible. They will tell you what they need from you.

For example, this could be:

- a letter from your local authority showing you're in care or a care leaver
- a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions showing the benefits you get

Benefits that qualify for a vulnerable bursary

Benefits must be in your own name to get a vulnerable bursary.

If you don't get them in your own name, you won't get a vulnerable bursary. Instead you may be able to apply for a discretionary bursary from your education institution.

Young carer

As a young carer you won't get a vulnerable bursary, unless you fall into one of the specific vulnerable groups. You can apply for help for a discretionary bursary. Your education institution will use the information you give them confidentially so you can talk to them about your caring responsibilities when you're applying for help.

Young parent

If you're a young parent in one of the specific vulnerable groups, for example, you're getting Income Support or Universal Credit in your own name you may get a vulnerable bursary. If you're not in one of the specific groups you may be able to apply for a discretionary bursary.

You can also get help with childcare costs through [Care to Learn](#).

Discretionary bursary

If you aren't in one of the specific vulnerable groups, but you need financial help to stay in education, you can apply for a discretionary bursary from your education institution.

To apply you must be aged 16 or over but under 19 (see the eligibility section for some more detail about 19 year olds) and in full or part time further education or training.

Your education institution is responsible for setting the criteria they use for discretionary bursaries. The criteria they use will focus on making sure bursary funds are targeted at students who need the most help to stay in education.

Examples of what their criteria could be based on include:

- your family's income
- if your parents get benefits
- if you currently receive free school meals or have had them in the past

How much you get is up to your institution. They decide who gets a bursary, how much, when it's paid and how it's paid. They can also say what you should spend it on.

Family's finances

Your education institution may ask for evidence of your family's household income when you apply. Examples of what they might ask for include:

- a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions showing receipt of benefits
- a P60
- a Tax Credit Award Notice
- evidence of your family's annual income
- 3 months' worth of payslips or bank account statements

Your institution will let you know what you need to show them.

Impact on DWP benefits

Bursary fund payments don't affect your right to Department of Work and Pensions income-related benefits (like Income Support, for example). However, if you're getting Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments and Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit, your parents can't get certain benefits (like child benefit) for you.

Help to pay for one-off things

Some education institutions offer one-off payments for things like educational trips or to attend university interviews. This might be in addition to help with longer-term costs for things like bus fares. Ask your institution for more information.

Eligibility

To get either of the 2 bursaries in the 2017 to 2018 academic year you must meet the conditions for your age and residency. Your study must also meet some conditions.

You must be aged:

- 16 or over at 31 August 2017
- under 19 at 31 August 2017

If you're aged over 19 you won't be eligible for the bursary unless you fall into one of 2 categories:

- you have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- you're continuing on a course you started when you were aged between 16 and 18 (this is sometimes referred to as being a '19+ continuer')

If you have a EHCP or are a 19+ continuer you should talk to your education institution to see if you get a discretionary bursary while you continue to attend education.

Other students aged over 19 may be able to get other support for older/adult students. Your education institution will tell you what you can apply for.

Students aged 19 or over are not able to get the vulnerable student bursary.

Your residency

You must meet the residency conditions to get a bursary. Your institution will check this.

How to apply

You need to contact student services or your tutor at your education institution to apply for the bursary. They will tell you what to do. There should also be information about the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund on your institution's website, including how you should apply.

You should apply as soon as you know where you're going to study. The sooner you apply, the sooner your support can start. Some institutions may have limited funds available and may allocate funding on a first come first served basis.

Your institution will tell you about any closing dates for application and what documents you will need to give them.

How you'll be paid

Institutions decide how the bursary is paid to you. They might pay it into your bank account in instalments, give you cash or a cheque or pay it to you in kind. This means that instead of getting money they will give you a travel pass, meal vouchers or course equipment. You might get paid partly in money and partly in kind. If you have any questions about your payment you should talk to your institution.

Bank account

If you're 16 years old you can open a basic bank account. This will allow BACS transfers (if your institution wants to pay the money into your bank account) and allow you to withdraw money. If you can't open a bank account you will need to speak to your institution to agree how the bursary will be paid to you.

Need more help to stay in education?

Some institutions keep some bursary funds to help students who need emergency help or different types of help during the year because their circumstances have changed. Other institutions provide one-off support through separate funds which aren't connected to the bursary.

If your circumstances change and you think you need more help speak to your education institution straight away. They will be able to tell you what to do.

If you're a young parent you can apply for a bursary and for help from [Care to Learn](#) for help with childcare costs whilst you study. If you have to move away from home to get the main qualification you're studying for, you may be able to get help with [residential costs](#). You should ask your tutor or student support team for more information and advice.

What the bursary is for?

As the bursary is to help pay for things you need to stay in education, institutions can say what you should spend it on. They may also ask for receipts to show how you've spent it.

If the institution buys you any course related equipment with the bursary they can require you to give it back to them when you finish your course.

Attendance and behaviour

Education institutions usually set conditions on your bursary. These are rules you need to stick to so you can carry on getting support from the bursary fund. The conditions they set could cover attendance or standards of behaviour. If you don't stick to the rules the institution has set they may stop your payments. Some institutions will ask you to sign a form to confirm that you've understood the rules they've set and what will happen if you break them.

Illness or absence

If you're ill or are absent from your institution for another reason this may affect your payments. Your education institution will give you more information about this.

Who will know you get a bursary

Your application is confidential and our education institution should make sure you're not singled out as getting a bursary.

If you're worried, talk to student support services or your tutor.

Fraud Declaration

If you or your parents or carers give false or incomplete information on your bursary application you may be committing fraud.

If your institution thinks this is the case they may pass details of your application to the Department for Education or the police. You and your parents or carers could be prosecuted and your institution will ask you to pay back any bursary payments you should not have had.

Education institutions may do sample checks as part of their assessment of your bursary application. This means they could ask you for further evidence. If you don't give them the evidence they've asked for, or if their looking at the evidence results in you being due a lower amount of bursary, they may stop payments or and ask you to pay back any payments you should not have had.