



Suffolk
New
College

BURSARY POLICY

2024/25 ACADEMIC YEAR

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Associated Policies	

Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Name of Policy: Bursary Policy

		Yes/No	Comments
1	Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	Race or ethnicity	No	
	Disability	No	
	Gender	No	
	Religion or belief	No	
	Sexual orientation	No	
	Age	No	
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	
	Maternity and Pregnancy	No	
	Gender Reassignment	No	
2	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
3	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	N/A	
4	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative/	No	
5	If so, can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
6	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N/A	
7	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	

Suffolk New College

Bursary Policy

This document sets out the College's policy on the calculation of eligibility to, and payment of bursaries. The schemes are designed to support as many learners as possible in a fair and equal manner.

For this policy, learners are taken to mean 16–18-year-olds and adults (aged 19 and over) attending either a full-time or part-time study programme. This definition also includes anyone on a short course or a 'Bootcamp' programme. It does not include anybody on an Apprenticeship course.

1. General

- 1.1 The College currently distributes four bursary funds on behalf of central government, namely:
 - 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary Scheme
 - 16-18 Discretionary Bursary Scheme
 - 19+ Discretionary Bursary Scheme
 - Advanced Learning Loans Bursary.
- 1.2 The age bands for each fund, are based on the learners age when they commence their current course of study. Please note that progressing Learners moving from a level 2 to level 3 course will be deemed to have started a new course of study,
- 1.3 These are separate funds, and it is not possible to transfer from fund to fund. As such, the four schemes may experience different terms and different rates of payment throughout the year.
- 1.4 There is also an additional fund that can help with childcare for learners aged up to 20. This is administered by central government directly and is called "Care 2 Learn", and can be applied for through Student Support.
- 1.5 There are also a number of funds operated by charitable trusts that only cater for certain cohorts of students. Advice on these is available from Student Support.
- 1.6 Bursary applications must be made within 8 weeks of the date of enrolment, otherwise they run the risk of their application being rejected.
- 1.7 The only exception to this rule is the Vulnerable Bursary fund, which is fully funded by central Government. In order to obtain the maximum bursary, learners must apply as soon as possible after enrolment, otherwise the fund will be limited based on the number of weeks remaining in the academic year.

- 1.8 The College expects excellent attendance and engagement from learners in receipt of the bursary, and reserves the right to curtail the amounts paid if the attendance falls short of that expected.
- 1.9 The College is responsible for setting a threshold for 16-18 Discretionary, 19+ Discretionary Bursary and the Advanced Learning Loans Bursary, over which they will not qualify for support. This varies according to the fund applied for, and is set out below.
- 1.10 The College will retain a small proportion of each fund for use as a hardship fund. This will be administered by Student Support and will only be used when it is considered by a member of staff that a period of genuine hardship is occurring, and a modest one-off payment or equipment purchase will create a positive outcome for a learner. This cannot be used for regular or ongoing expenses, as this will inhibit its reach within the learner population.
- 1.11 For the purposes of this policy, household earnings includes:
- Earnings from employment
 - Jobseekers allowance
 - Employment & support allowance
 - Universal credit
 - Pension (both old age and private)
 - Working tax credits
 - Child tax credits
 - Other regular income (such as child maintenance income)
- But specifically excludes:
- Housing benefit
 - Child benefit
 - Disability living allowance or personal independence payments
- 1.12 Please note that levels of household outgoings, i.e. bills etc., will not be taken into consideration as part of the decision-making process. Our decisions are based solely on levels of household earnings.
- 1.13 Learners aged under 24 must provide these details for all persons living at the address, including siblings as necessary.
- 1.14 Single learners aged 24 and over, who are still living at home, only need to provide this information for themselves.
- 1.15 Learners aged 19 and over who are living with a partner must provide the partner's information as well as their own.

- 1.16 All bursary payments will be made by BACS into a bank account, which **must** be in the learner's own name. At the absolute discretion of the College, this may be waived in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.17 Payments will be made during term-time only and on a half-termly basis in advance, to allow for bus passes, etc. to be purchased.
- 1.18 Childcare payments, where applicable, will only be made to Ofsted registered childcare providers, and will be made directly by the College. We will not reimburse any learner directly in cash for any childcare payments.
- 1.19 Payments from all of the schemes will be based around the learner's actual need and will make a contribution towards meeting those additional costs associated with attending College.
- 1.20 They are not designed to cover the following:
- to support extra-curricular activities
 - to support non-compulsory or non-essential activities
 - to provide support with living costs
- 1.21 The College reserves the right to review the amounts paid and the thresholds used, scheme by scheme, during the year, as funds allow.

2. 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary Scheme

- 2.1 This scheme pays out an amount of up to £1,200 per annum per full time learner (pro-rata for part-time learners, or learners studying courses of less than 30 weeks duration).
- 2.2 To be eligible for this bursary the learner must be either:
- in care (including unaccompanied asylum seeking children - UASC) or,,
 - a care leaver or,
 - in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name **and** are supporting themselves **and** supporting dependents, or,
 - in receipt of **both** Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) **and** Universal Credit (UC) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in their own name.
- 2.3 These learners are eligible to receive a one-off payment for any additional course costs, such as travel, trips, materials and kits, plus a half-termly hardship payment into their bank account to a maximum value of up to £1,200 per annum, depending on their level of need. The College will provide transport for those

students who meet the criteria in paragraph 2.2 and who travel to College on our transport scheme, as part of the £1,200 limit.

- 2.4 In addition, any learner who can also submit proof that they, or their parents or carers, are in receipt of one of the benefits listed in paragraph 3.4 (with the exception of young carers) is eligible for payments from the Free College Meals fund.

3. 16-18 Discretionary Bursary Scheme

- 3.1 This scheme pays out an amount to all eligible learners with household earnings (see para 1.10) of less than £28,000 per year. The amount paid out to individual learners will depend on each individual learner's particular circumstances.
- 3.2 Those learners aged over 19 (as at 31 August), but who started a course of study at the same level (i.e. who started a 2-year level 3 course) before they turned 19, retain funding under the 16-18 discretionary scheme, including entitlement to Free College Meals.
- 3.3 Similarly, any learner aged over 19 and under 25 (as at 31 August) who is also in receipt of an Education & Health Care Plan (EHCP), will also be funded out of the 16-18 discretionary bursary, including entitlement to Free College Meals.
- 3.4 Those learners who are in receipt of, or whose parents or carers are in receipt of, one of the following benefits:
- Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income Related Employment & Support Allowance
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Guaranteed Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit (with no entitlement to Working Tax Credit and an annual gross income of £16,190 or less)
 - Universal Credit (UC) with net earnings not exceeding £7,400 for each year (£616.66 per month or £142.00 per week) – after tax and not including any benefits they get, or
 - Are a young carer (supported by their local Young Carers team)

are guaranteed to get a payment under this scheme, depending on their individual needs. These may be paid to a supplier on the student's behalf, or the learner may be required to submit receipts as proof of purchase.

To assess the receipt of income all pages of any benefits or income must be provided otherwise this may delay the application process.

- 3.5 The college will provide transport for those learners who meet the criteria in paragraph 3.4 and travel on the College transport scheme to Suffolk Rural college. No additional payments will be made directly to these learners. Learners can find information regarding a travel pass and how they can apply for this on the Suffolk New College Website (www.suffolk.ac.uk).
- 3.6 With the exception of the young carer category, any learner who is eligible under 3.4 above is also automatically eligible for benefits from the Free College Meals fund at the rate of £2.53 for each day that they are timetabled to be in college. This will be topped up to a value of £3.50 per day from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.
- 3.7 Those learners who can provide evidence that they were in receipt of free school meals whilst they were at school can receive them in the 2024/25 year, and subsequent years providing they don't change their course or level of study.
- For example, a learner studying on a year 1 of a Level 3 Art & Design course during the 2024/25 academic year would be eligible to receive free college meals for 2025/26 as well, whereas a learner studying a L2 Art & Design course in 2024/25 would not automatically be eligible for any further study in 2025/26 and subsequent years as they would have changed their course or level of study.
- 3.8 If the learner has received a bursary in the previous academic year, they will not be required to provide proof of income for the household if their circumstances have not changed. The student will be required to declare this via a tick box option on the application form.

4. 19+ Discretionary Bursary Scheme

- 4.1 This scheme pays out to all eligible learners with household earnings (as defined in paragraphs 1.10-.113) of less than £28,000.
- 4.2 These payments may be paid directly to a supplier on the learner's behalf, or the learner may be required to submit receipts as proof of purchase.
- 4.3 Learners aged 20 and over with children, can also apply for assistance with childcare (see para 1.16).
- 4.4 Learners can apply for assistance with travel when travelling to Rural using the College Transport Scheme. Student's choosing not to travel using the College Transport Scheme will not be eligible for any additional payments.
- 4.5 If current situations warrant, we reserve the right to allow extra hardship. This can be in any form such as but not limited to, extra hardship payments to extra childcare days for exams or classes timetabled in.

5. Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Scheme

- 5.1 To be eligible under this scheme, the learner must have applied for, and been accepted for a loan. Applications from learners whose loan has not yet been approved will be considered under the 19+ Discretionary bursary scheme as outlined in paragraph 4.
- 5.2 This scheme pays out to all eligible students with household earnings (as defined in paragraphs 1.10 - 1.13) of less than £28,000.
- 5.3 These payments may be paid to a supplier on the learner's behalf, or the learner may be required to submit receipts as proof of purchase.
- 5.4 Learners aged 20 and over with children, can also apply for assistance with childcare (see para 1.16).
- 5.5 Learners can apply for assistance with travel when travelling to Rural using the College Transport Scheme. Learner's choosing not to travel using the College Transport Scheme will not be eligible for any additional payments.
- 5.6 If current situations warrant, we reserve the right to allow extra hardship. This can be in any form such but not limited to, extra hardship payments to extra childcare days for exams or classes timetabled in.

6. Change of Circumstances

- 6.1 If a student's circumstances change during the year, for whatever reason, then they have a right to have their bursary application reviewed. They should contact the Bursary and Transportation Officer in the first instance (bursary@suffolk.ac.uk, or phone 01473 382750) to review their application.

7. Appeals Process

- 7.1 You are not entitled to an automatic right of appeal.
- 7.2 Please note, household outgoings are not considered by this policy. It is solely based on household income as defined in para 1.10 above. If your query is about household outgoings, please make an appointment with Student Support to discuss any short-term hardship problems that you may be experiencing.
- 7.3 If you think that the income that has been taken into account wrongly, please re-submit your application with the correct income details.

- 7.4 If you wish to complain about the policy or its operation, please e-mail finance@suffolk.ac.uk. Please allow 28 days for a response.
- 7.5 You can only appeal if you have grounds to. You can only appeal if you feel that the policy document has not been followed in a consistent manner. You must provide an explanation of this in your appeal.
- 7.6 Any appeal that meets the above ground to appeal, must be made via e-mail to bursaryappeals@suffolk.ac.uk. You will receive an outcome of your appeal within 28 days of receipt and acknowledgement by the College.