Post 16 Bursary Policy and Application Process

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Policy Summary

1 Background

This policy is in line with the DfE 16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2025/26.

The bursary is made up of two parts: a bursary of up to £1,200 a year, allocated to the most vulnerable young people and a discretionary fund for schools, academies and colleges to distribute. Each institution can set its own eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursaries and the terms and conditions under which they are awarded.

- The college will retain 5% of their allocation from the DfE for administration
- It is recommended that the college retains 30% of the allocation for 'in-year applications'
- The college should ensure that they retain a small emergency fund for exceptional circumstances
- The monies allocated to the 16-19 Bursary cost centre are ring-fenced and any underspend must be rolled into the following year

The 16-19 Bursary is designed to help support those people who 'face the greatest barriers to continuing in education and training post-16'. Applications can be made throughout the academic year as students' financial or home situations change. The Bursary has two elements which will be termed as part of the Engineering UTC Northern Lincolnshire's Policy as 'Full Bursary' (vulnerable bursary) and 'Eligible to Apply' (discretionary bursary). Appendix 2 (Guidance for Students) details the eligibility criteria and FAQs. To be eligible to apply and receive a discretionary bursary, a student must be under 19 on 31 August in the academic year they start their course. Where a young person turns 19 during their year of study they can continue to be supported until the end of the academic year or end of the course, whichever is sooner. Young people must also satisfy the residency criteria in the DfE funding regulations.

Full Bursary students receive a vulnerable bursary which is automatically made available to the students in one of the categories below:

- Young people in care – children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis, or under a care order.
- Care leavers (DfE class 'care leavers' as a young person aged 16-17 or, a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18, which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16 and lasted for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks).
- Students receiving Income Support or Universal Credit, in their own name
- Students 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.

All the students listed above are automatically entitled to a bursary by the DfE and may receive up to £1,200 over the course of the academic year. Eligibility under the Full Bursary will be verified using the following documents which must be copied and retained for ESFA audit purposes:

- A letter from the Local Authority confirming care or leaving care arrangements.
- Claiming Receipt for both Disability Allowance or PIP and Employment Support Allowance: a letter setting out the benefit to which a young person is entitled, confirming that the terms of the benefit allow them to take part in further education – see appendix
- Claiming receipt for income support /Universal Credit (paid to them not their parents).

The eligibility criteria to **make an application** for an 'Eligible to Apply' bursary are:

- A household income of below £25,000 (this includes Universal Credit)

- A student currently entitled to Free School Meals, or
- A student whose parents are currently claiming other means-tested benefits including Income Support, Working Tax Credit/ Child Tax Credit, Income Based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), who is not entitled to free school meals

- At the decision of the Principal, any student who does not fall under the categories listed above, but consider themselves to be in financial hardship
- Students who are young carers and are not in receipt of a carer's allowance

Eligibility under the 'Eligible to Apply' Bursary will be verified using any of the following documents which must be copied and retained for audit purposes in a secure place:

- An Income Support award letter which is less than 3 months old at the date of application.
- All pages of a recent Tax Credit Award
- 3 months of Universal Credit Award letters
- An ESA award letter which is less than 3 months old at the date of application.
- A pensions/ benefits award letter which is less than 3 months old.
- 3 months of wage slips
- Self- employment audited accounts or an official tax return.

Please see the Bursary application form in the appendices.

An appeals panel will sit to consider the case of any student who wishes to challenge the decision not to award a bursary and any complaints will be processed through the College Complaints Procedures.

All students must have their own bank account to receive an award, and all payments made directly to the student will be made via BACS whether it is a stand-alone payment or a regular instalment.

For the 2025 2026 academic year the UTC can continue to use its bursary fund to provide emergency food support to individuals in cases of severe hardship. This support is provided for students that the UTC consider to be in real need, without having to carry out the usual checks on household income. We expect this to only apply to a very small number of 16 to 19 students.

2 The Application Process – 2025-26

Students can submit an application at any point during the academic year as their financial/home situation dictates but payments will not usually be backdated. However, their application will be subject to a review of their attendance and behaviour at the end of each half term. As is college policy, a student starts a 'clean slate' at the start of each half term and a bursary payment will be paid subject to their meeting the terms and conditions in the 16-19 Bursary Contract in that half term.

Students/parents could also have submitted an application to the Local Authority and been awarded Free School Meals before they submit their application; the college can have this verified by the LA as a means of assessing household income.

The Principal will review each application and following this, a recommendation will be made regarding each application. The Finance Department will then set up a BACS payment for the successful applicants and pay their bursary in half termly instalments for Full Bursary awards and on an a 'need' basis for 'Eligible to Apply' bursary students.

For 'Eligible to Apply' it is best practice to pay **'in kind'** rather than in cash. For example, students can have a travel pass purchased on their behalf, free school meals provided, or a student could be supplied with a PC purchased from the bursary budget and loaned to the student for the duration of their course.

During the academic year, the Finance Department will make payments upon instruction from the Head of Sixth Form, following a review of the student's attendance and behaviour. All payments will be countersigned by the Principal.

All students are expected to make the Head of Sixth Form aware of any change in financial/home situations as they arise. Parents/ students are required to sign to this effect in the Bursary Contract and if upon review it is found that individuals have falsified documents, submitted inaccurate information or been claiming money fraudulently, the Academy will refer the matter to the police. The application process is supported by the 'Appeals Process' and the 'College Complaints Procedures'.

3 The Appeals Process

All students have the right to appeal the decision and must submit a letter to the Principal within two-weeks of receiving their decision letter. All decisions regarding appeals will be communicated within a week of the Appeals Panel meeting and this decision will be final. However, this should not stop a student submitting a further application should they feel they have sufficient change in circumstances.

4 Academy Complaints Procedures

Should a student/parent wish to make a formal complaint regarding the 16-19 Bursary Application and Decision Process, they should follow the UTC Complaints Procedure.

5 Application of the 16-19 Bursary Funding

The Bursary Contract clearly states that there 'is an expectation that a student will spend their Bursary to support their education and this could cover such outgoings as transport costs, books and equipment, trips and other course related costs'. Students may require the money to pay for food but for those in receipt of Free School Meals this in itself will be the support under that category.

6 16-19 Bursary Conditions

Payments will only be made if students have good attendance (over 95%) and a good attitude to learning and others. It is the decision of the Principal and Head of Sixth Form as to whether this criteria has been met. Discretion around attendance may be applied in exceptional circumstances.

Full bursary payments may be reduced following a review of behaviour and attendance each half term. Should a student fail to meet the conditions of their Bursary contract, they will lose some or all of their payment on a pro-rata basis. The table below gives an exemplar payment structure for students receiving a 'Full Bursary'

7 Timetable for Payments

Date	Payment	Review	Payment from DfE
September	Up to £200. It is best practice to buy items for students from each payment 'in kind'		Instalment to College funds - August
November	up to £200		
January	up to £200	Check behaviour and attendance	
April	up to £200		
May	up to £200	Check behaviour and attendance	Instalment to College funds - April
June	up to £200		

POST 16 BURSARY APPLICATION

All the information on this form will be used in the strictest confidence. An unsuccessful application for a 16-19 Bursary does not affect your place to study at Engineering UTC

Name: _____

DOB: _____

Contact no: _____

Date of application: _____

Section 1: Please now complete the following administrative questions:

State which school/college you are transferring from:

_____

Section 2: Assessing Eligibility – Stage 1.

Which of the criteria below makes you eligible for a 16-19 Bursary? Please tick only one box:

'Automatically Eligible'

	I am in care
	I am a care leaver
	I am a student who is receiving income support
	I am registered disabled and in receipt of both 'Employment Support Allowance, & 'Disability Living Allowance'.
	I receive PIP in my own right

'Eligible to Apply'

If you are making an application under the 'Eligible to Apply' please state which benefits your parents are in receipt of. Your FSM status will be checked with the Local Authority.

	I have successfully applied for and receive free school meals (which will be verified by the Local Authority).
	Universal credit/Income Support
	The guarantee element of the State Pension Credit
	Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
	Support under Part VI of the immigration & Asylum Act
	Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Work Tax Credit and have an annual income that does not exceed £25, 000)

Section 3: Assessing Eligibility – Stage 2:

If you have ticked a box in the 'eligible to apply' category please explains why you believe you meet the eligibility criteria and how you would use the 16-19 Bursary to support your education post 16. Please be as specific as you can and give supporting evidence where possible:

Please continue overleaf if you need more space to complete your statement of eligibility.

Assessing Eligibility – Stage 3 – Verification

Please state clearly what supporting documentation you are submitting as part of your application. Students who have ticked a box in the 'Automatically Eligible' section should submit appropriate evidence to verify their status. See list below:

- Written confirmation from the Local Authority that you are currently in care or previously were in care.
- A letter setting out the benefits you are in receipt of on headed note paper from the Benefits Office.
- Copy of 'Employment Support Allowance, & 'Disability Living Allowance'.

All documentation should be originals unless verified by the Business Manager who will take a photocopy and sign as part of the verification process.

Any change in financial/home situation should be communicated to the College in writing. Parents/ students are required to sign to this effect in the Bursary Contract and if upon review it is found that individuals have falsified documents, submitted inaccurate information or been claiming money fraudulently the College will refer the matter to the police.

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Carer signature: _____ Date: _____

ENLUTC

Post 16 Bursary Claim Form (to be completed each half term)

Name of Student	Approved	Signed by Head of Sixth Form
Details of Receipts to be reimbursed/orders to be made by Finance		£
		Total amount

Signed by student	Date