



LEARNER SUPPORT FUND POLICY

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1. Purpose

- 1.1.1. Telford College is committed to supporting students and reducing financial barriers to enrolment or progression.
- 1.1.2. The Learner Support Fund (LSF) is designed to:
- Prevent withdrawal due to financial hardship.
 - Promote access for underrepresented groups.
 - Ensure fair and efficient processing of financial support.
 - Monitor and review the effectiveness of support in line with the Equality Act 2010.

2. Scope

- 2.1.1. This policy governs the administration of discretionary awards received annually by Telford College, including:
- Enhanced Bursaries (16–19)
 - Discretionary Awards (16+, including adult learners)
 - Advanced Learning Loans Bursary
 - Free College Meals
 - Childcare Support
- 2.1.2. To qualify, students must:
- Meet residency requirements.
 - Be enrolled on an eligible full-time or part-time course.
 - Be able to evidence eligibility per relevant award
 - Meet any other requirements as determined by the discretionary awards
- 2.1.3. The following groups are not eligible for financial support through this policy:
- HE students
 - Waged apprentices
 - Young offenders in custody or recently released

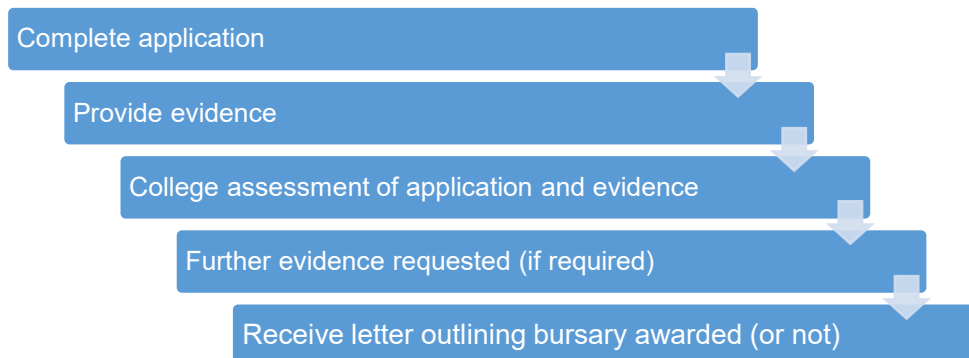
3. Types of Support Available

- 3.1.1. There is a range of support available depending on the award, course enrolment and the individual needs of the student. This includes:
- Bus passes (local providers or college service)
 - Kit/uniform, books, materials where appropriate
 - UCAS and exam fees (including one resit)
 - Professional fees (e.g. AAT)
 - Childcare fees (up to £180/week)
 - Free college meals (£17.50/week)
 - Emergency hardship payments

4. Making an application

4.1. Application Process

4.1.1. Below is the general process for applying for a bursary.



4.1.2. The College will assess applications within a 15 working day period from receipt of all evidence. In most cases, students will receive an award notification earlier than this, however, during busy periods, this may not be possible.

4.1.3. Students are encouraged to make applications for financial support early to ensure funding is in place for the start of their course.

4.2. Providing evidence

4.2.1. To process your application promptly, please upload suitable evidence demonstrating that you meet the eligibility criteria. Evidence should be as up-to-date as possible and submitted at the time of application.

4.2.2. College staff will review all evidence to confirm eligibility. Copies will be deleted once the review is complete, except where an award is made under the Enhanced Bursary; these records are retained for audit purposes.

4.2.3. Evidence should be uploaded via the online application form. If additional information is required after submission, we will contact you by email or other relevant channels such as via telephone or messenger. Further documents should be sent to financialsupport@telfordcollege.ac.uk, with the student's name clearly stated in the subject line.

4.3. Attendance Monitoring and Payment Conditions

4.3.1. Student attendance is monitored weekly to ensure continued eligibility for bursary support. A minimum attendance rate of 85% is required to maintain access to bursary payments.

4.3.2. If a student's attendance falls below this threshold, payments may be withheld or reclaimed. The College retains discretion to authorise payments in exceptional cases where attendance criteria have not been met due to individual circumstance.

5. Enhanced Bursaries (16–19)

5.1. Eligibility

5.1.1. To qualify for this bursary, you must be;

- Aged 16–18 on 31 August prior to the September start date of your course.
- Maintain 85% attendance for continued eligibility

5.1.2. In addition, you must fall into one of the following vulnerable categories:

- Looked After Child
- Care Leaver
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit (in own right)

- Receiving ESA and DLA/PIP (in own right)

5.2. Support Available

5.2.1. The following support is available through the Enhanced Bursary:

- Bus pass or travel expenses
- Kit/uniform, books, materials where appropriate
- UCAS and exam fees (including one resit)
- Professional fees (e.g. AAT)
- Childcare fees
- College meals
- Emergency hardship payments

5.3. Evidence Required

5.3.1. In order to demonstrate you meet the eligibility for this bursary, you will need to provide the following:

- Letter from the Local Authority confirming looked after/care leaver status.
- Letter from Jobcentre Plus confirming relevant benefits.
- Last 3 Universal Credit award statements.

Based on evidence submitted, we will assess applications to identify the actual financial need for students and provide accordingly.

6. Discretionary Awards (16+, including adult learners)

6.1. Eligibility

6.1.1. To qualify for this bursary, you must;

- Be any age, enrolled on full or part-time course (excluding HE and apprenticeships).
- Have a household income below £35,000.
- Meet residency criteria.
- Maintain 85% attendance for continual eligibility

6.2. Support Available

6.2.1. The following support is available through the Discretionary Award:

- Bus pass or travel expenses
- Kit/uniform, books, materials where appropriate
- UCAS and exam fees (including one resit)
- Professional fees (e.g. AAT)
- Childcare fees
- College meals
- Emergency hardship payments

6.3. Evidence Required

6.3.1. In order to demonstrate you meet the eligibility for this bursary, you will need to provide the following:

- Tax Credit Award or Review (2025/26)
- Universal Credit statements
- Income Support / JSA / ESA letters
- Audited accounts or tax return
- Pension Credit letters
- Payslips
- Housing/Council Tax benefit letters
- Bank statements (to prove nil income)

7. Advanced Learning Loans Bursary

7.1. Eligibility

7.1.1. To qualify for this bursary, you must;

- Be aged 19+ at course start
- Have an Advanced Learning Loan
- Have a household income below £35,000

7.2. Support Available

7.2.1. The following support is available through the Advanced Learning Loan Bursary:

- Bus pass or travel expenses
- Kit/uniform, books, materials where appropriate
- Professional fees (e.g. AAT)
- Exam fees (including one resit)
- Childcare fees
- UCAS fees

7.3. Evidence Required

7.3.1. In order to demonstrate you meet the eligibility for this bursary, you will need to provide the following:

- Tax Credit Award or Review (2025/26)
- Universal Credit statements
- Income Support / JSA / ESA letters
- Audited accounts or tax return
- Pension Credit letters
- Payslips
- Housing/Council Tax benefit letters
- Bank statements (to prove nil income)

8. Free College Meals

8.1. Eligibility

8.1.1. To qualify for Free College Meals, you must be either;

- Aged 16–18 on 31 August prior to the September start date of your course.
- Aged 19–24 with an EHCP
- Continuing a course started before turning 19

8.1.2. In addition, your parent/carer must receive one of the following qualifying benefits:

- Income Support, Universal Credit , Income-based JSA/ESA
- Support under Immigration and Asylum Act
- Pension Credit (guaranteed element)
- Child Tax Credit (<£16,190) – not eligible if receiving Working Tax Credit

8.2. Support Available

8.2.1. The following support is available through Free College Meals:

- £17.50 weekly allowance

8.2.2. The funds will either be loaded onto ID cards or in exceptional circumstances, paid directly into bank accounts. Students who are attending block work placement will be provided with an alternative method of payment during this time where feasible.

8.3. Evidence Required

- 8.3.1. In order to demonstrate you meet the eligibility for Free College Meals, you will need to provide the following:
- Full benefit letters
 - Income evidence from parents/carers or partner (depending on living arrangements)

9. Childcare Support

9.1. Eligibility

- 9.1.1. To qualify for this financial support, you must;
- Apply directly to the college through the bursary application form
 - Use an Ofsted-registered provider
 - Have a household income below £35,000
 - Be the main carer of your child
 - You must maintain an attendance level of at least 85%

9.2. Support Available

- 9.2.1. The following support is available through childcare support:
- Up to £180/week per student to cover timetabled lessons and placement hours
- 9.2.2. The awarded funds will be paid directly to the provider. It is recognised that this may only be a contribution to the full cost of the childcare. Any shortfall is the responsibility of the student.

9.3. Evidence Required

- 9.3.1. In order to demonstrate you meet the eligibility for childcare support, you will need to provide the following:
- Completed Childcare Provider Terms & Conditions form
 - Student timetable
 - Income evidence (as per Discretionary Awards)

10. Appeals and Complaints

- 10.1.1. Applicants who wish to appeal a bursary decision may do so in writing to appeals@telfordcollege.ac.uk within ten working days of receiving notification. The grounds of the appeal should be clearly stated.
- 10.1.2. The appeal will be heard by a panel chaired by a senior leader and communicated within 10 working days. This decision will be final.
- 10.1.3. Should you wish to raise a concern about the process, you may do so in accordance with the College's Compliment and Complaints Policy. No complaint will be progressed while an appeal relating to the same matter is currently being considered and the outcome of a complaint will not overturn an appeal decision.

11. Monitoring and Review

- 11.1.1. Bursary data will be monitored termly to identify trends, gaps, and areas for improvement.
- 11.1.2. The impact of the policy will be reviewed annually by the Admissions Manager, Director of Safeguarding and Student Support and Senior Leadership Team.

11.1.3. Updates will be made in response to legislative and funding changes, inspection outcomes, and stakeholder feedback.