16-18 Financial Support Procedure

16-18 Bursary Fund/Free Meals in Further Education Procedure 2018/19

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https://www.don.ac.uk/student-support/financial-support/
16-18 Financial Support Procedure

Overview

Students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) are advised to fully read this procedure prior to submitting an application to ensure understanding of the 16-18 Bursary, how it is paid, the conditions attached to receiving support and the evidence required for an application to be submitted and assessed. Returning students who received financial support in 2017/18 must re-apply for support for 2018/19.

Bursary Fund applications can be submitted from the 6th of August 2018 and can be submitted up to the 28th of June 2019 (late applications are not guaranteed support & where the eligibility criteria is met, support will be determined by fund availability at the point of the application being processed); applications will not be accepted before the 6th of August 2018 & must have all of the required supporting evidence as highlighted on the application form. Applications without all of the required supporting evidence will not be accepted.

Students applying for a Bursary are advised to do so in a timely manner – due to limited funds, applicants are informed that meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee ‘discretionary’ support and we advise that where possible, applications are submitted in person rather than by post due to the evidence required – where applications are submitted by post we recommend that they are sent via Recorded/Special Delivery to the address shown on the application form and that you do not send originals as we cannot guarantee that we will be able to return these to you, Doncaster College cannot accept responsibility for postal applications that are not received.

Submitted applications will automatically be assessed for both the 16 to 18 Bursary and Free Meals in Further Education – applications can be printed from the College website at www.don.ac.uk/welfare/finance or can be collected from the Financial Support Team office in room S.1.900 (please note that paper applications available from the Financial Support Team will be limited).

To be eligible to apply to the 16-18 Bursary Fund, students in the first instance must meet the following criteria:

- Be aged 16-18 (age taken at 31st August 2018), the only exceptions to this are 1) students aged 19 who are either continuing on a study programme they began when they were 18 (19+ continuers), 2) students aged 19-25 who have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), 3) students under 16 who are enrolled onto an accelerated learning programme

In addition to the above, students must also meet one of the following residency criteria (please note that students applying for ‘discretionary’ support will also need to evidence a net household income of less than £25,000 per year):

- Be ‘settled’ in the UK and have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for three years or more preceding the ‘relevant date’ – this is classed as being the 1st of September where the academic year starts on the 3rd of September 2018. ‘Settled’ means having either indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/ILR) or having the right of abode in the UK *British citizens and certain other people have the right of abode in the UK
- Be a national of an EU country or child of an EU National and have ordinarily been resident in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland or Norway for at least 3 years or more preceding the ‘relevant date’ (see above)
- Be a child of Turkish workers where the Turkish worker has been lawfully employed and resident in the UK at any time in the past and where the student has been resident in the EEA and Turkey for the full three-year period prior to the commencement of their programme
- Be a child of a refugee who has been granted Humanitarian Protection, or have temporary EU protection
- Be an ‘accompanied asylum seeking child’ (i.e. those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) – these students where eligible will receive ‘in-kind’ support only such as lunch credit & kit/uniform, under no circumstances can support be given via cash
- Be an ‘unaccompanied asylum seeking child’ being looked after by their Local Authority (these students will be treated as ‘looked after children’ and will be eligible for a Guaranteed Bursary)

Submitted applications will be assessed by the Financial Support Team who will determine which type of bursary a student is eligible for based on the evidence provided.

Where students do not meet the required eligibility criteria, they are not eligible to financial support from the 16-18 Bursary – if you are unsure whether you meet the required criteria please contact the Financial Support Team to discuss.
Please note that the following groups of students are not eligible to apply for a 16-18 Bursary:

- Students who are under 16 on the 31st of August 2018 (with the exception of those students who are enrolled onto an accelerated learning programme)
- Students who are 19+ on the 31st of August 2018 (with the exception of those students who are either continuing on a study programme that they began when they were 18 (19+ continuers) or students who are aged 19-25 and who are under an Education, Health and Care plan)
- Students who do not meet the residency requirements as set by the Education & Skills Funding Agency
- Students with a net yearly household income of £25,000+
- Students who are enrolled on a distance learning programme and who therefore have no travel/course related costs
- Students who are serving a custodial sentence/have been released from a custodial sentence on temporary licence or who have been remanded to a secure institution – students serving a non-custodial sentence/have been released early from a custodial sentence (except on temporary license)/have been remanded to a non-secure institution can apply for a bursary but support will be made ‘in-kind’ rather than cash payments
- Students who are not in Further Education
- Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged learning are viewed as being employed, rather than in education and are not eligible to apply for a bursary – students who are on a traineeship programme are non-waged so may be eligible for a bursary if they meet the eligibility criteria

The 2 types of bursary are:

1. A Guaranteed Bursary
2. A Discretionary Bursary (this fund is means tested & limited, meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee support & early application is advised) where students can evidence a household net income of less than £25,000 per year

Both bursaries are in place to support eligible students with their course related costs and can contribute towards the following:

- Lunch (where the student is not eligible for the Free Meal Entitlement)
- Travel (the award a student receives may not fully cover their travel costs & should be viewed as a ‘contribution’ – students are advised to take advantage of any travel discounts/subsidies available to them)
- Materials/kit & uniform
- UCAS application costs – if you apply for University through UCAS & where funds allow you can apply for this cost to be refunded. UCAS will ask that you pay their fee by debit card & you will need to provide evidence of this.
- The costs of attending University Open Day/Interviews – where students incur ‘public transport’ travel costs as a result of attending a University Open Day/Interview in the UK, we may be able to help with these costs. This support will depend on available funds and where funds allow, students can apply for up to a maximum of 2 visits. Evidence of public transport costs i.e. train/bus booking confirmation & also evidence of invite/attendance at University must be provided – support cannot be given for overnight accommodation costs incurred as a result of University visits.
- Exam re-sits - we can support a maximum of 2 exam re-sits where funds allow and where students have previously failed the exam – students requiring support with these costs need to come to the Financial Support Team office with their re-sit form which will need stamping & signing by a member of the team before they submit it to the Finance cash desk
Financial Support Procedure

Support is not awarded for the following purposes/costs:

- Enrolment or administration fees imposed by the College
- Fees for access to facilities at the College
- College Deposits – where students are asked to pay a ‘refundable’ deposit as part of their programme of study, support cannot be given for this cost due to it being refundable.
- High cost equipment – due to limited funds, support cannot be given for the cost of items such as laptops/cameras
- Attendance bonuses/incentives – weekly/monthly payments are based on students meeting the required attendance criteria of at least 75% and on them displaying satisfactory behaviour whilst at Doncaster College, bonuses cannot be awarded where students have good attendance throughout the year
- General living costs – e.g. mobile phone bills
- Car Parking – where students choose to travel to College by car, support cannot be awarded for the cost of parking

Receipt of bursary funding will not affect receipt of means tested benefits paid to families such as Income Support, Jobseeker’s Allowance etc. However if the student is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments and Employment Support Allowance or in receipt of Universal Credit, parents can no longer receive certain household/family benefits for that child, such as child benefit.

Bursary payments are not subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students & Income Related-related Benefits) Regulations 2000 as they are not for living costs.

Guaranteed Bursary

To be eligible to apply for a Guaranteed Bursary of up to £1,200 (subject to attendance criteria being met), the student must be able to evidence that they fall into one of the following categories:

- Be in care/looked after (children looked after by a Local Authority on a voluntary basis including unaccompanied asylum seeking children (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989); section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term ‘looked after child’ or any young person placed with a foster carer by the Local Authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency; a young person who is privately fostered i.e. the arrangement has been made between the parent and the person who will care for the child would not be classed as a looked after child as this is a private arrangement
- Be a care leaver (either a young person aged 16 or 17 who were previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16 or a young person who is aged 18 who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of 13 weeks) which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16)
- Be receiving either Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right and is financially supporting themselves/supporting themselves & someone who is dependent on them such as a child or partner (where students are in receipt of Income Support in their own right, they are also eligible for the Free Meal Entitlement)
- Be receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments in their own right – if a student’s ESA payments have been replaced by Universal Credit, the student must still be in receipt of DLA or PIP to be eligible for a Guaranteed Bursary

Where students do not receive the above benefits in their own right they are not eligible for a Guaranteed Bursary but they may be eligible to apply for a Discretionary Bursary depending on the level of household income.

Where students are in receipt of support through Care to Learn, they may also apply for a Guaranteed Bursary to help meet the additional costs of their studies.

Eligible students who are studying a full time programme of at least 30 weeks can expect to receive up to £1,200 (where attendance requirements are successfully met); eligible students who are studying less than 30 weeks will receive a pro-rata award and the amount awarded will depend on the number of weeks studied.
16-18 Financial Support Procedure

Payments are made on a weekly basis and are paid one week in arrears and where students meet the minimum expected attendance of at least 75%, the weekly amount payable is £33.33. Where students do not meet the expected weekly attendance criteria of 75%, payment will be stopped for the week in question.

These payments are to contribute towards the student’s day to day costs of attending College such as travel & lunches – where required, all other support for items such as kit/uniform will be paid directly to the College on the student’s behalf unless otherwise specified.

Doncaster College will need to see evidence that a student is eligible to receive a Guaranteed Bursary and this will vary depending on which category the student falls into:

- Students who are in care/care leavers: written confirmation from the students local authority/Social Worker confirming the students looked after/care leaver status
- Students in receipt of the qualifying benefits: evidence of benefits i.e. award letter/online statement - students in receipt of the qualifying benefits are advised to inform the DWP of any College based financial support awarded to them (please note that a student’s benefit entitlement will not be affected by any support awarded through the 16-18 Bursary Fund)

Discretionary Bursary

Students who are not eligible to receive a Guaranteed Bursary may be eligible to receive a Discretionary Bursary (these funds are limited and meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee support – early application is advised and all applications will be assessed in a fair & consistent manner). These funds are awarded at the discretion of Doncaster College and consequently Doncaster College reserves the right to revise payments according to student need and availability of funds.

To be eligible to apply for a Discretionary Bursary, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be aged between 16 and 18 (age taken as of 31st of August 2018, where a student turns 19 during their year of study, they can continue to receive a Bursary up to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19)
- Have a yearly household net income of less than £25,000
- Meet the residency requirements as set by the EFA: Accompanied asylum seeking children (i.e. those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) who have not had their application for asylum refused, can apply for in-kind support only such as lunch credit & travel vouchers, under no circumstances can support be given via cash; unaccompanied asylum seeking children are looked after by their local authority and should be treated as a ‘looked after child’, they are therefore eligible for a Guaranteed Bursary

Students who apply for a Discretionary Bursary must evidence that they have a net household income of less than £25,000 per year and when assessing applications; the following income(s)/benefit(s) are included in the assessment process:

- Earned income
- Unearned income such as rental income
- Out of work Benefits i.e. Income Support/Universal Credit, JSA, ESA, Incapacity Benefit etc.
- Working & Child Tax Credits
- CSA/Maintenance payments
- Private Pensions
- State Pensions
- War/Military Pensions
- Additional income i.e. savings/rolling balance (any amounts over £1,796.00 will be included as income in the assessment)

The following are not included in the assessment process and evidence is therefore not required:

- Child Benefit
- Housing/Council Tax Benefit
- Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments
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Applications cannot be accepted without all of the necessary evidence as stated on the 16-18 Bursary Fund/Free Meal Entitlement application form – please ensure that you provide this as failure to do so will delay your application.

Both full and part-time students are eligible to apply for a Discretionary Bursary and the amount awarded will be based on the student’s number of guided learning hours over the academic year (to be classed as a full time student, a student must be studying at least 540 guided learning hours within the academic year for which they are applying).

As this is a ‘limited’ Government fund, Doncaster College reserves the right to amend payments in year in accordance with student need and availability of funds. These funds are not an entitlement and where support is awarded it should be viewed as a ‘contribution only’ to students course related costs and in some cases, the support awarded may not cover the full costs of travel as these costs will vary depending on the students home address and age.

Payment of the 16-18 Bursary Fund

The support awarded will vary depending on the type of bursary awarded, the student’s age, the students programme/guided learning hours and availability of funds – once a decision has been made on a student’s application, the student will be notified via e-mail directly to their College e-mail account (students need to ensure that they regularly check their College e-mail account so that they do not miss any notifications/updates with regards to their financial support).

Recipients of the Guaranteed Bursary are paid weekly and recipients of the Discretionary Bursary are paid monthly. Payments are made directly into the student’s bank account unless otherwise stated on the students support notification. Both bursaries are paid in arrears and are dependent on the student meeting the required criteria attached to payments. Please refer to the Guaranteed/Discretionary Bursary Payment Schedules for expected payment dates.

Students aged 16 can open a basic bank account which will allow BACS payments and allow the student to withdraw money – if students are unable to open a bank account they are advised to discuss this with the Financial Support Team for possible alternative methods of payment but it is good practice to make payments by BACS; payments cannot be made to parents/guardians and must be made directly to the student (except in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account i.e. where Power of Attorney is in place & evidence of this can be provided). We are not able to make payments into either a Post Office account or a Credit Union account.

Criteria regarding payments

For students to receive their weekly/monthly payments, they are expected to meet the minimum attendance criteria of at least 75% for the week/month for which payment relates to.

When calculating student attendance, attendance is looked at on a weekly/monthly basis rather than overall attendance. Attendance is calculated by session/s (lesson/s) attended/missed, rather than days attended/missed.

Where students do not meet the expected attendance criteria of at least 75% then the payment will be stopped for the week/month in question and there is no recourse for appeal due to the required attendance criteria not being met – students will be notified via e-mail to their College e-mail account when a payment is stopped & where a student feels that their register data is incorrect, we advise that they discuss this with either their Programme Tutor or their Progress and Performance Tutor.

Register Marks

With regards to the 16-18 Bursary Fund, the following register marks are seen as negative and will impact on a student’s attendance:

- Notified/Authorised/Unauthorised absences
- Holiday
- Sickness
- Doctors/Dentist/Hospital
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In addition to payments being stopped as a result of attendance; payments can also be stopped if the student does not adhere to the following standards:

- Students must be punctual and on time
- Coursework should be submitted according to agreed deadlines and to the best of the students ability
- Students must maintain acceptable standards of behaviour - if a student’s behaviour is considered to be unacceptable this can result in payments/support being stopped and where a student is suspended from College all support will be stopped until further notice

It is expected that Doncaster College students adhere to the above standards and recognise that failure to do so will result in payments/support being stopped/withdrawn.

When submitting an application, both the student and where applicable a parent/guardian, must sign the application declaration which confirms that any evidence provided is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. By signing this declaration, the student and where applicable their parent/guardian are agreeing to the conditions and eligibility criteria attached to both the Guaranteed and Discretionary Bursary.

Declined Applications

Where an application for support is declined, notification of this is sent via post and in the event of a student wishing to appeal against an application being declined; the appeal must be made in writing and be based on one of the following criteria:

- Change in circumstances
- Household income (in excess of £25,000)

For an appeal to be considered it must be made within 10 working days of the student receiving their notification and must be addressed to the Financial Support Team who will then forward to the Director of Finance. The Director of Finance will then determine whether the appeal meets one of the appeal criteria within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.

Where it is deemed that the appeal does not meet one of the necessary appeal criteria, then the student will be notified in writing of this and there will be no further recourse for appeal.

Free Meal Entitlement Procedure

From September 2014, Colleges were required by the Education Act 1996 to provide free meals to students where they meet the required eligibility criteria for support.

Students must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31st August 2018 to be eligible for the Free Meal Entitlement. Students who turn 19 during academic year 2018/19 will remain eligible for the Free Meal Entitlement until the end of the academic year.

Students aged 19 to 25 who are subject to an ‘Education, Health and Care plan’ (EHC plan) are entitled to the Free Meal Entitlement where they meet the required eligibility criteria.

Students aged over 19 who are continuing on the same study programme (19+ continuers) they started before they turned 19 are also entitled to the Free Meal Entitlement where they meet the required eligibility criteria.

To be eligible for the Free Meal Entitlement, students must be in receipt of, or have parents/guardians who are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support/Universal Credit (where net earnings do not exceed the equivalent of £7,400 per annum)
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance/Income-related Employment & Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration & 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 you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
The following groups of students are not eligible for the Free Meal Entitlement:

- Students aged under 16 (these students are already covered by a different provision i.e. Free School Meals)
- Students aged 19 or over at the start of their study programme unless they have an LDA or EHC plan or are continuing the same study programme that they started before they turned 19
- Apprentices, including those with an LDA or EHC Plan

How is the Free Meal Entitlement received?

**Students studying at The Hub:** student ID cards will automatically be loaded at the fixed daily rate of £2.41 each day of the week; cards will be reset daily & any unspent funds will be reclaimed – funds cannot be carried over to the next day. Where the cost exceeds the fixed daily rate, the difference can be paid for by the student. It is expected that where students receive their Free Meal Entitlement directly onto their College ID card, that they carry this with them at all times – failure to do so will result in them not being able to access their Free Meal Entitlement.

**Students studying at Aston Springs Farm:** payments will be made retrospectively directly into the student’s bank account at the end of every half-term & will be based on attendance for the period for which the payment relates to (payment is made at a fixed daily rate of £2.41 for each day attended during the period for which the payment relates to). Please see below for the expected payment dates for academic year 2018/19:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Payment Date</th>
<th>Period Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05/11/18</td>
<td>03/09/18 – 26/10/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/01/19</td>
<td>05/11/18 – 21/12/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/02/19</td>
<td>07/01/19 – 15/02/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/05/19</td>
<td>25/02/19 – 12/04/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/06/19</td>
<td>29/04/19 – 24/05/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/07/19</td>
<td>03/06/19 – 28/06/19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where students are required to undertake a placement/work experience as part of their programme, registers will be checked at the end of the academic year & payment will be based on actual attendance over the year for placement/work experience sessions and as above, payment will be made directly into the student’s bank account & paid at a fixed daily rate of £2.41.

Where students are receiving their Free Meal Entitlement directly onto their student ID card, if the student’s ID card is lost or damaged and a replacement ID card is given, the student must inform the Financial Support Team of this so that the Free Meal Entitlement can be transferred to the new ID card.

Where students transfer programmes and it results in a change to their site of study, students are advised to inform the Financial Support Team of this as this may change how they receive their Free Meal Entitlement.
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**Additional Information**

What happens to my application and supporting evidence once submitted?

All applications are treated as **confidential** and are only seen by those responsible for the processing of student applications but it may be necessary from time to time for the Financial Support Team to contact other College staff/third parties for additional information to allow applications to be processed or for attendance monitoring purposes.

The information/evidence given to support the Bursary Fund/Free Meal Entitlement is used lawfully & for the specified purpose of determining student eligibility for financial support as per ESFA guidance & Doncaster College’s Financial Support Policy 2018/19.

The application/supporting evidence is retained by Doncaster College for a period of 6 years as per ESFA requirement & is handled in a manner that ensures appropriate security & protection against unauthorised access.

Notification of support is sent directly to the student’s College e-mail account and this includes details of support and expected payment dates etc. – please ensure that you check this regularly as any updates/stoppage notifications will be sent to this e-mail. **Applications received with all of the required evidence can expect to receive a decision within 6 working weeks from the date of submission but due to high volumes at the beginning of the term, this period may be extended.**

If a student withdraws from or is suspended from College then their application will be cancelled and they may be written to and asked to pay back any monies paid to them.

**Fraudulent Claims**

If a student provides false or inaccurate information/evidence with regards to household income the matter may be referred to a third party and may result in the student being asked to leave Doncaster College – in addition, the College will try and recover any payments made to the student.

If you think another student may have made a fraudulent claim, please discuss this with the Financial Support Team in confidence.

**Questions**

If you are unsure about what support you might be eligible to apply for or you have any other questions with regards to the application process, please contact the Financial Support Team to discuss.

Office drop-in hours are as follows:

**16th of July to 31st August 2018:** service hours are Monday to Friday, 8.45 to 4.30pm (please note the College will be closed on both the 27th and 28th of August and will re-open on the 29th of August)

**3rd September 2018 onwards during term time:** service hours are Monday to Friday, 11.30 to 1.30pm (these hours are in place to allow the team to process applications and out of these hours the team can be contacted by either telephone or e-mail)

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Financial Support Team: Room S.1.900  
Direct Telephone: 01302 553760  
Email: financial.support@don.ac.uk  
https://www.don.ac.uk/student-support/financial-support/