

Adult Skills Policy Learner Support Fund

Guidance information

Policy Statement

The Adult Education Budget (AEB) Learner Support is available to support learners with a specific financial hardship that prevents them from participating in learning. The fund will be distributed in a consistent and equitable way and in accordance with guidance issued by the Skills Funding Agency.

Chelmsford College has determined that funds will be allocated to cover the course related costs, it deems necessary, for learners to complete their Study Programme. **Support is very limited and cannot cover all costs associated with all Study Programmes.** Funds will generally be paid to a third party, not directly to the learner.

All on-going bursary payments will be subject to 90% attendance across your study programme and meeting college expectations of coursework and behaviour or payments may be withheld. Students are responsible for monitoring their attendance and addressing any

discrepancies in their records.

It is always advisable to consider the availability of other strands of financial support and enquire, for example, about what financial assistance is available through the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) as the AEB must not be used where other sources of funding are available. Please speak with a DWP Advisor as soon as possible as early applications are essential to allow processing time before your enrolment.

Each application is individually assessed and **all assistance is subject to the availability of funds.** Learners who are eligible for support are not automatically entitled to it. If demand exceeds the available funds, reduced awards may be given and when the fund is fully committed, no further awards will be made.

Applications are assessed against household income. Means testing will be rigorous but not excessive and supporting evidence of personal circumstances and/or relevant benefit evidence will be required. All sources of financial support will be taken into consideration when assessing applications.

Criteria	Bursary Support Available
Financial assistance for learners with a taxable household income not exceeding £35,000 Household earnings include: • Universal credit • Earnings from employment, must not exceed £35,000 • Job Seekers allowance • Employment and support allowance • Pension Income • Working tax credits • Child tax credits • Young people in care/care leavers • *Part-time/Short Programme Learners (Only eligible for financial assistance marked * in opposite column)	Food Allowance: Maximum £7.50 per timetabled day. This is automatically added to your college card once your bursary application has been approved. Where remote food vouchers are provided under the college food allowance scheme, they will be sent to your college email address. It is your responsibility to access them and assign them within 4 weeks of the delivery date, as after this they will expire and will not be re-issued. Travel: The Bursary Fund may be able to help towards your travel costs. Please refer to the College Travel Scheme for cost information. * Course Costs: Financial assistance for help towards costs such as uniforms, books, equipment and materials. Only costs deemed necessary to complete your Study Programme will be paid. * Tuition Fees: (in exceptional circumstances tuition fees can be considered). * Fees: (professional membership, exam, registration or DBS). * Childcare: 100% of term time costs up to £5,600 (pro-rata) per learner.
Applications from households with an income exceeding £35,000 are not normally considered. However, if you feel that you have extenuating circumstances, please submit an application and provide a covering letter to explain your situation. Supporting evidence should also be provided.	

Eligibility

To be eligible for support you must meet the requirements as stated in the Funding Rules 2025/2026 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, be 19+ years of age on 1st September 2026 **AND** be able to demonstrate a genuine hardship which is causing a barrier to learning.

Please note: Students aged over 19 who started a two year programme before their 19th birthday or aged 19 and over who have an EHCP should apply for funding for the 16-19 bursary fund.

Priority groups

Priority will be given to:

- Existing learners progressing to the next level
- Young people in care or care leavers
- Young Adult Carers - individual assessments will be undertaken

The following groups are **NOT** eligible for financial assistance

- Learners on HE courses
- Learners in prison or released on temporary licence
- Learners in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan (please refer to the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Policy)

Application Process

Applicants must complete the relevant application form from the fund they are applying to, and clearly identify the support they feel they need to achieve their course of study, within eligibility guidelines.

- Applicants must demonstrate their financial need by providing the income information and supporting evidence as detailed in the application forms.
- All applications are assessed on receipt of a correctly completed application form within the priority groups.
- As funds are limited, an early application is advisable.

A decision on your application will be made within 14 working days from the date received and funds will be allocated following your enrolment. A confirmation email will be sent to your College email address.

If all funds have been allocated, your details will be recorded on a waiting list.

Chelmsford College cannot take responsibility for any correspondence lost or mislaid in the post.

Appeals

If you don't agree with a decision and wish to appeal, please put it in writing to the Director of Learner Experience and Essential Skills within 7 days of being informed of the assessment outcome. Appeals will be resolved within 21 working days.

Additional Information

Financial Award Conditions

In order to receive financial awards learners are expected to achieve a satisfactory attendance of 90% and above across their study programme and meet college expectations of coursework and behaviour. If attendance does not meet College requirements payments may be withheld, subject to a progress review with learner's Curriculum Area Manager. Personal circumstances will be taken into consideration when determining if payments are to be re-instated.

Bursary

Learners will be required to have their own bank account to receive bursary payments.

Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances discretionary payments can be considered for costs which have been identified as a barrier to participating in learning. Applications for discretionary payments will be referred to the Student Support Team Leader for assessment. Where there are exceptional circumstances, reasonable adjustments to the policy can be made.

Financial Hardship

Applications can be made where household income exceeds the guidelines and evidence of financial hardship can be demonstrated e.g. redundancy, bereavement, debt management. Supporting evidence will be necessary to fully assess your application and determine level of support available.

Additional Study Hours or Industry Placement

Travel and food costs can be considered for additional studies required to complete your Study Programme.

Changes of Circumstances

Learners will be required to disclose any change of circumstances during the year which may affect their eligibility. If a learner leaves the College before the completion of their Study Programme they may be asked to repay their award or return any equipment.

Reimbursements:

The College Bursary Fund will only offer reimbursements for approved items purchased by you where authorised by the Learner Financial Support Lead.

Reimbursements require prior agreement and will only be offered for essential items with a valid receipt. They must be claimed within 30 days of purchase.

Additional Information on Childcare

Childcare

For Learners aged 20+, on funded full or part time programmes. Financial assistance will be towards College term time care costs only (up to 36 weeks). It is the learner's responsibility to find a term time only carer or be responsible for covering any additional costs. Adjustments can be made where a learning provision falls outside college term time.

How to Apply for Childcare

Complete the additional childcare application form. Following the assessment and if your application is successful, you will be contacted by the Learner Financial Support Lead with confirmation.

Conditions:

- Childcare providers must be registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register and/or the compulsory part of the Ofsted General Childcare Register. Where a childcare provider is related to the child, for example a grandmother or aunt, that childcare provider must also prove they are providing registered childcare services for children they are not related to.
- The childcare provider must complete the Childcare Provider section of the application form.
- Childcare will be for timetabled days only and paid up to **100%** of the total term time cost minus any available Government funding with a ceiling of £5,600 (pro-rata) per learner.
- Learners supported with childcare costs are expected to pay for all ancillary charges eg. meals, nappies, trips etc.
- Learners must achieve a satisfactory attendance of 90% and above and meet college expectations of coursework and behaviour or payments will be withheld.
- It is expected that holidays will not be taken during term time but should this occur, childcare costs for the period of absence will not be paid.
- A cheque made payable to the carer must be collected and signed for by the learner.

Please note:

Applications for financial assistance are valid **for one academic year only**. Should you return to the College in September 2027 and still require financial support a new application form must be completed and up to date supporting evidence provided.

The information provided is correct at time of application but may be subject to change in line with Government guidelines. This document can also be found on the Chelmsford College website www.chelmsford.ac.uk and may be converted to other formats if appropriate (Braille, Large Print, Other Languages etc).

This guidance applies to the academic year 2026/2027 and is reviewed annually. **The closing date for applications is 24th October 2026.**

N.B: If you require a lap-top for college studies this is made available through the college lap-top loan scheme. This will need to be arranged through your Academic Tutor or Head of Department.

Please note Ipads and software are not available through the Bursary Fund.

All correspondence relating to Bursary including confirmation of your award will be sent to your student email address