

Academic Year 2025/2026

Financial Support Eligibility Guide

For Further Education Students

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General Information for All Applicants

Applicant Responsibilities

You need to ensure you:

- Are familiar with the student support fund you are applying for support from.
- Keep the Financial Support Team informed of changes to your personal circumstances, address or contact details.
- Provide, at each stage of the application process, honest and accurate information in a timely manner which could have a bearing on the outcome of your application.
- Meet college behaviour and attendance standards. Awards will cease immediately if you withdraw early from your course, or you no longer meet the eligibility criteria for the Bursary.

Key Information

The information below applies to all college Learner Support Funds included in this guide.

- The Funds described in this guide are available to learners who need financial help with course essential costs and who have enrolled and started with the College on a course of Further Education funded by either the Department for Education (DfE), East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), or Student Loans Company (Advanced Learner Loan) or otherwise publicly funded.
- You must be living and studying in England and meet the residency criteria in the Department for Education's (DfE) or East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) funding rules.
- These Funds are not available to you, if you are on a Full Cost, Tailored (Community) Learning, Higher Education, Apprenticeship programme or any other waged training undertaken. They are not available to you if you are in prison, or a Young Offender's Institution or if you have been released on temporary licence, such as day release or remanded to a secure institution.
- If you are an Advanced Learner Loan student, support can only be provided if the college has received Student Loans Company confirmation that you have a fully approved loan for the course you have enrolled on and you have attended this course for a minimum of two weeks.
- Your application will be assessed against the relevant eligibility criteria for each fund.
- Awards are made on a first come first served basis and are cash limited. Support, therefore, cannot be guaranteed.
- These funds are scheduled to close to new applicants on the 19th May 2026 and existing applicants on the 26th May 2026.
- You will not receive support, or it will be reduced, if your participation costs are being wholly or partly met from other financial sources (e.g. Local Authority Funding etc.) or it is deemed you have no essential course participation costs. It cannot be used for extracurricular activities or non-compulsory activities, living costs or Learning Support (e.g. counselling).
- The minimum award you can receive is £5.00.
- Any specific item for which an award has been made (e.g. uniform/equipment) may be deemed college property and you may be asked to return it on completion of your course or if you withdraw early.
- You will not qualify for financial support during college-controlled leave weeks, half terms, Christmas and Easter, as the support provided is term time only.
- If you are classed by the DfE or EMCCA as fully funded for fees purposes, or if you pay for either all or part of your course fees through an Advanced Learner Loan you will not be eligible for help with the cost of a Disclosure and Barring Service check. This cost must be paid for by your curriculum area.
- If you are classed by DfE or EMCCA as fully funded, or you pay your course fees either in full or in part through an Advanced Learner Loan, you can only get help with uniform/equipment costs if these items are to be taken outside of the learning experience.
- Other rules may apply and the above may be subject to change or amendment without notice.

Support Available

Subject to eligibility you may receive a contribution towards help with essential course participation costs as confirmed by your study area. These costs include:

- Uniform and equipment
- College meals - worth a maximum of £4.50 per day (other rules apply see page 7)
- Travel to college or college arranged work experience/industry placements (other rules apply see page 9)
- Cost of appropriate rail cards
- Travel to Higher Education interviews (maximum of two)
- Cost of UCAS application fee
- Stationery
- Books
- Trips within England that are confirmed in writing by your academic study area as essential for you to complete specific learning aims of your study programme goals/qualifications or supports the course objectives
- Examination resit fees
- Childcare support (other rules apply see page 11)

How We Assess Gross Household Income

Where you live with somebody other than the situations outlined below, your application will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Learners aged 16-18 on the 31st August 2025

- If you live with either two parents, two legal guardians or one parent/legal guardian and their partner you will be assessed on the combined gross household income and/or benefit(s) received of both adults.
- If you live with a lone parent or lone legal guardian, you will be assessed on the gross household income and/or benefit(s) received of that adult.
- If you live with an adult who is not your legal guardian (e.g. other family member(s) or other adult(s)), you will only be assessed on the gross household income and/or benefit(s) received of that adult(s) if that adult(s) is claiming Child Benefit or Universal Credit for you. Written proof will be required to confirm this.
- If your living costs are being paid by your parent(s)/legal guardian(s), then you will be considered a dependent of that parent/guardian and will be assessed as shown above.
- If you are living independently and meet your living costs in full through work and/or receipt of a benefit in your own right, then you may be assessed on your (the learner's) gross income and/or benefit(s) received. You (the learner) will need to provide evidence to confirm you are financially supporting yourself (e.g. a tenancy agreement in your name, a utility bill/council tax bill in your name).

Learners aged 19+ on the 31st August 2025

- If you live with your parent(s)/guardian(s) or independently, in halls or a shared house, you will be assessed on your (the learner's) gross income and/or benefit(s) received.
- If you live with a partner you will be assessed on the combined gross household income and/or benefit(s) received for both you and your partner

16-18 Extended Bursary - Part of the DfE's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

The 16-18 Extended Bursary is worth up to a maximum of £1,200.00 per academic year and is based on your essential course participation costs.

- You must be aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August 2025
- You must provide current, documentary evidence to confirm your circumstances meet one of the following criteria:
 - In Local Authority Care or a Local Authority Care Leaver
 - Living independently (proof required, e.g. a tenancy agreement in your name, a utility bill/council tax bill in your name), or living independently and supporting someone else, such as a partner or child **and** in receipt of Universal Credit in your own right
 - In receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments **and** Universal Credit, all in your own name

You must have a bank account in your name to receive this Bursary. The Bursary cannot, under any circumstances, be paid into anyone else's account.

If your essential course participation costs exceed £1,200 further support will only be available if you or your parent(s)/guardian(s)/foster carers financial circumstances meet the eligibility criteria of the 16-18 Learner Support Fund. You or your parent(s)/guardian(s)/foster carers will need to complete an additional paper-based application form to see if you are eligible to receive support from this Fund.

16-18 Learner Support Fund - Part of the DfE's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

- You must be aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August 2025.
- You must live in a household where your parent(s)/guardian(s) are in receipt of one of the benefits listed below and/or whose assessed gross household income is less than £45,000 per year
 - Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income Support
 - Universal Credit – but only where assessed annual net earnings when added to your or your parent(s)/guardian(s) Universal Credit monthly payments do not exceed £45,000 per year
 - Employment Support Allowance
 - Pension Credit – Guarantee Credit
 - Working Tax Credit/Child Tax Credit – but only where Total income for the year 2025/26 when added to your parent(s)/guardian(s) Tax Credit for the period shown on their 2025/26 HMRC Award Notice does not exceed £45,000 per year

Your parent(s)/guardian(s) may also be required to sign an income/savings and investments declaration and may also be requested to provide further evidence e.g. a bank statement.

Support **will not** be given if any of the evidence submitted shows that there is not a financial need or parent(s)/guardian(s) savings and/or any Investments exceed £16,000.

The only exception to the above eligibility criteria is where a written endorsement of your unique need for support is provided by the college Safeguarding Team.

16-18 Travel Pilot - Part of the Lincoln College Hardship Fund

Applications to this fund must be submitted before 30th September, 2025.

- You must be aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August 2025.
- Your parent(s)/guardian(s) gross household income must be assessed as between £45,000 and £60,000 per year.
- You must have enrolled and started on a DfE funded course at either Newark College, including ASI, **or** your postcode begins with LN7, LN8 or DN21 **and** you attend a further education course at Lincoln College (Monks Road, Christ Hospital Terrace, Rand Park Farm, Caistor Equestrian Centre or Horncastle Town Football Club).
- Your parent(s)/guardian(s) may also be required to sign an income/savings and investments declaration and may also be requested to provide further evidence e.g. a bank statement.
- Support **will not** be given if any of the evidence submitted shows that there is not a financial need or parent(s)/guardian(s) savings and/or any Investments exceed £16,000.

19+ Learner Support Fund - Part of either: The DfE or EMCCA 19+ Adult Skills Fund (19+ ASF), or the DfE's 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary (19+ ALL)

- You must be aged 19 or over on 31 August 2025.
- Your circumstances must meet at least one of the following criteria:

You are in receipt of:

- Jobseekers Allowance
- Income Support
- Universal Credit – but only where assessed annual net earnings when added to your Universal Credit monthly payments do not exceed £45,000 per year
- Employment Support Allowance
- Pension Credit – Guarantee Credit
- Working Tax Credit/Child Tax Credit – but only where Total income for the year 2025/26 when added to your Tax Credit for the period shown on your 2025/26 HMRC Award Notice does not exceed £45,000 per year

Or,

- You live with your parents, do not receive benefits, and your gross income is less than £15,000 per year, or
- You live independently as a single person, do not receive benefits and your gross income is less than £30,000 per year, or
- You live with a partner, do not receive benefits and your gross household income is less than £45,000 per year.

You (and where applicable your partner) may be required to sign an income/savings and investments declaration and may also be requested to provide further evidence e.g. a bank statement.

Support will not be given if any of the evidence you submit shows you do not have a financial need or you (and where applicable your partner) have savings and/or any Investments exceeding £16,000.

If you are aged 19 to 24 on 31/08/2025 and have a 2025/26 Academic Year Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or you are aged 19 on 31/08/2025 and continuing on a study programme you began aged 16 to 18 (known as a 19+ Continuer) you will, if eligible, receive support through the DfE's 16-18 Learner Support Fund. To be eligible for support from this fund your financial circumstances must still meet the eligibility criteria for the 19+ Learner Support Fund.

Learners Aged 19 or over and enrolled on Level 3 or Above Further Education Funded

Qualifications

In addition to the 19+ LSF financial eligibility criteria, if you are studying a level 3 or above Further Education course you will not be able to receive support unless:

- 1) You are a 19+ continuer (on the same course, at the same level as you started in the academic year you turned 19), or
- 2) You are aged between 19 and 24 and are subject to a 2025/26 Education Health Care Plan, or
- 3) You are aged 19-23 and are enrolled on an eligible Full Level 3 qualification and are studying your first Full Level 3 qualification, or
- 4) You are aged 19 or over and undertaking a course funded through the Free Courses for Jobs offer and you meet the additional eligibility criteria to receive fee remission, or
- 5) You have made a successful application for a 19+ Advanced Learner Loan and are using your loan to pay all or part of your course fee

Should it be found at a later date that you do not meet criteria 1 to 4 above you will be required to repay any support you have received unless you make a successful application for an Advanced Learner Loan.

Meals Support: Key Information for All Applicants and Additional Eligibility Criteria

The college offers three meal support schemes. They are known as Free College Meals, 16-18 Learner Support Fund Meals Support Scheme and 16-18 Extended Bursary Meals Support.

You will receive an allowance of £4.50 per day from the date your eligibility is confirmed on the days you physically attend one of our college sites (other rules apply).

If you attend Lincoln College (Monks Road Campus) or Newark College (including Newark ASI) you will access your allowance via your student ID card.

You can use your meal allowance at any time throughout the day whilst our catering facilities are open e.g.:

- to purchase a breakfast, or
- to purchase a main meal at lunchtime, or
- to purchase a sandwich, Meal Deal, or nutritional snack.

If you attend Lincoln College Christ's Hospital Terrace, Rand Farm Park, Lincoln Drill Hall, Caistor Equestrian Centre or Horncastle Town Football Club you will be notified in your award email/letter how your allowance can be accessed.

Free College Meals - Part of the DfE's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

- You must be aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31st August 2025, or
- Aged between 19-24 on the 31st August 2025 **and** either subject to a 2025/26 Education Health Care Plan, or aged 19 and studying on the exact same programme you started before you turned 19,
- You must also be in receipt of, or living with parent(s) who are in receipt of, at least one of the following benefits or types of support:
 - Income Support
 - The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
 - Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
 - 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 HMRC)
 - Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 for each year (after tax and not including any benefits received). Self-employed parent(s) must also provide a copy of their company registration form or tax return for 2024/25.
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- If you have previously received Free School Meals at any time since 01/04/2018 and you or your parents do not provide evidence that meets the FCM eligibility criteria, the college may, with your consent, write to Lincolnshire or Nottinghamshire County Council to see if you are eligible for what is known as Transitional Protection.
- If you received Free College Meals in academic year 2024/25 at another FE funded institution you can also receive Transitional Protection if you provide a signed and dated letter on that institution's headed paper that clearly states that you received Free College Meals during academic year 2024/25.
- If you attend a college organised work experience/placement or trip, you can receive a payment of £4.50 per day on production of a completed placement form.

The Department for Education intends to fully discontinue Transitional Protection from the start of academic year 2026/27 and introduce new eligibility criteria. To be eligible for Free College Meals for academic year 2026/27 all applicants must meet the new eligibility criteria to continue receiving a free meal.

16-18 Learner Support Fund Meals Support Scheme - Part of the DfE's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

- You must be aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August 2025
- You must meet the eligibility criteria for the 16-18 Learner Support Fund (see page 5)

16-18 Extended Bursary Meals Support Scheme - Part of the DfE's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

- You must be aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August 2025
- You must meet the eligibility criteria for the 16-18 Extended Bursary (see page 5)

Travel Support: Key Information for All Applicants and Additional Eligibility Criteria

The college offers three types of travel support. They are 16-18 Learner Support Fund Travel Support, 16-18 Travel Pilot and the 19+ Learner Support Fund Travel Support.

- You must live 1.5 miles or more from the College site attended if you are eligible for the 16-18 Learner Support Fund or 19+ Learner Support Fund. If you are eligible for the 16-18 Travel Pilot you must live 2.5 miles or more from the College site attended.

There are two exceptions to this rule:

- You have a learning difficulty/disability which means you are not able to walk to college from your home address. You will be required to provide a signed and dated letter on headed paper by your Doctor to confirm this, or have undertaken an assessment with a Student Services Assessment and Support Co-ordinator who has uploaded written confirmation of this to your college record.
- You are in receipt of Childcare Support provided by Lincoln College.
- Support will be calculated using the shortest suggested route, including walking on Google Maps.
- You must provide a copy of your bus/train ticket to confirm the cost of your daily journey. Support cannot be provided if you do not do this.
- Support will not be provided for travel by taxi.
- You must use the cheapest and most appropriate mode of transport, including the use of rail cards, discounted bus-fares, and can only claim for one return journey from and to your normal place of residence per day.
- Support is worth up to a maximum of £70.00 per week for the 16-18 Learner Support Fund or 19+ Learner Support Fund and £16.00 per week if you are eligible for the 16-18 Travel Pilot.
- Support is normally paid half-termly by BACS and will only be provided from the half-term your application is assessed as successful.
- You will only receive support for the days when your on-line college register confirms you physically attend at one of the college's learning sites.
- Awards made are based on the cost of travel at the beginning of the Academic Year.
- Travel awards are provisional and based on you maintaining an attendance level of 100% (including Tutorials, Maths, English and Work Experience/Industrial Placement). Awards will be withdrawn or reduced where you fail to do this.
- From July to November the college receives a high level of applications for financial support. It is your responsibility, therefore, to pay for transport until you receive your first award.

If You Travel to College by Car

- Approved awards for travel by car/motorcycle will be paid at a rate of 25p per mile. You can only claim for one return journey. You will only be paid mileage if you are the driver/rider, or you are being taken to college by a parent/guardian who is not a college student and who is making an exceptional journey to transport you to college. Where the parent/guardian is transporting two or more learners to the same college location at the same time only one learner will receive travel support.
- The Fund will not reimburse car parking charges or parking fines

If You Travel to College by Train

- If you are aged 16 or 17 your award will be based on you having purchased a 16-17 Saver Rail Card. The 16-17 Saver Rail Card costs a maximum of £35 and offers a reduction of 50% off all rail travel.
- If you are aged 18 or above and your return ticket costs in excess of £12.00 per day your award will be based on you having purchased the 18-25 Rail Card or 26-30 Rail Card. This costs a maximum of £35 and gives 1/3rd of some rail fares.
- You maybe eligible for a refund towards the cost one of the above rail cards if you meet the eligibility criteria of the Learner Support Fund. You must provide evidence that confirms you name, the date valid to and from and purchase price of the rail card.

If You Travel to College by Bus

- Your cost of travel will be based on, where applicable, the national bus fare cap unless a cheaper alternative is available (e.g. Stagecoach Young Persons ticket which is available for learners under the age of 20).
- If you or your parent(s)/guardian(s) have paid for Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) Post 16 Transport Pass you must provide us with proof of payment and the TRA and PAY numbers which LCC issue to successful applicants.
- If you are aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31st August 2025 and live within the red line as shown on this map and would like the LCC Transport Pass rather than be paid half-termly by BACS, but are not able to pay for it you must:
 - Apply for the LCC Post 16 Transport Pass
 - Provide us with the TRA and PAY numbers which LCC issue to successful applicants.
 - From July to November the college receives a high level of applications for financial support, as does LCC for their Transport Pass. If, therefore, you choose this option, it may take several weeks before you receive your pass. It is your responsibility to pay for transport until you receive your pass.

Childcare Support: Key Information for All Applicants and Additional Eligibility Criteria

The college offers two types of childcare support. They are Care to Learn (C2L) and the 20+ Childcare Support.

- You must be the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for your child(ren) for whom you are claiming childcare support. If you lose custody of your child(ren), even temporarily, you must notify the Financial Support Team immediately.
- If you are in receipt of, or become eligible for Government funded hours, these hours must be used first. The Childcare Support Funds will only support additional hours beyond the Government funded hours based on your timetabled provision.
- You can claim childcare support as long as:
 - the child(ren)'s other parent is unable to provide childcare, for example, they are also in education, at work or are absent.
 - the other parent is not claiming childcare, paid through any other source, for example, government funded early years places or Childcare Tax Credits.
- Your childcare provider must be on the appropriate Ofsted register for the age of the child(ren) you wish them to care for.

This can include:

- A Childminder
 - A Preschool Playgroup
 - A Day Nursery
 - Breakfast Club/After-school Club
- Childcare payments will be made direct to your childcare provider.
 - Childcare payments will cease immediately if you stop attending or if you remove your child from your childcare provider. This is a national rule. You will be responsible for any fees that are not covered by either the Care to Learn Scheme or 20+ Childcare Support Fund.

16-19 Care to Learn (C2L) Childcare Support - Provided through the DfE

- You must be under 20 years old on the date you start your study programme. If you become 20 years old during your study programme you can continue to receive funding to the end of that specific study programme, so to the end of the same programme at the same level.
- C2L can provide childcare and travel support up to a maximum of £180.00 per week based on your timetable at college. If your costs are more than the £180.00 Care to Learn maximum, further support will only be available if you meet the eligibility criteria for the Learner Support Fund. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, it is your responsibility to pay any outstanding amount above the Care to Learn maximum of £180.00 per week.
- C2L may pay for travel costs, where appropriate, if these are necessary for you to take your child(ren) between your childcare provider and home. C2L travel costs are only paid if they are not being met from the Learner Support Fund and are additional to your normal travel costs from home to the college.
- C2L can pay for deposits up to a maximum of £250.00 if the childcare provider requires this.
- C2L will pay any registration fees that are charged by your childcare provider, up to a maximum of £80.00 per child. This is a one-off payment and will not be paid for subsequent academic years if you use the same childcare provider.
- C2L may pay a maximum of £180.00 a week towards the cost of a summer retainer fee. This only applies if you finish study in one year and continue your study in the next academic year (other rules will apply).

20+ Childcare Support - Part of either: The DfE or EMCCA 19+ Adult Skills Fund (19+ ASF), or the DfE's 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary (19+ ALL)

- You must be aged 20 or over on the day you start your course.
- You must be in receipt of at least one of the following benefits:
 - Income Support
 - Universal Credit— but only where assessed annual net earnings when added to your Universal Credit monthly payments do not exceed £45,000 per year (other calculations and rules apply)
 - Working Tax Credit/Child Tax Credit, but only where Total Income added to your Tax Credit award for the period shown on your Final or Amended Tax Credit Award Notice for 2025/26 does not exceed £45,000 per year.

You (and where applicable your partner) may be required to sign an income/savings and investments declaration and may also be requested to provide further evidence e.g. a bank statement.

Support **will not** be given if any of the evidence you submit shows you do not have a financial need or you (and where applicable your partner) have savings and/or any Investments exceeding £16,000.

- If your childcare support application is successful you will get up to 100% of your childcare fees paid, provided you maintain an attendance level of 85%
- The childcare fund cannot help with deposit fees, registration fees or summer retainer fees.
- Subject to continued eligibility (which must be re-confirmed each academic year) and funds being available the college will support childcare fees for a maximum of three academic years
- You cannot receive support from this fund if you receive either the Childcare Element of Tax Credits or the Childcare Element of Universal Credit.
- The 20+ Childcare Fund, after deductions (e.g. 15 or 30 government funded hours per week), can contribute a maximum award per academic year of £8600.00 (£200 per week) regardless of number of children claimed for and/or childcare providers used.

Unsuccessful Applications

- If your application is unsuccessful you will be emailed and advised of the reason for this decision.
- You may appeal this decision by writing to the Financial Support Team Specialist, Student Services, Lincoln College, Monks Road, Lincoln, LN2 5HQ. You will receive a written reply to your appeal within 10 working days.

Complaints Procedure

- If you are unhappy with any aspect of the administration of your application or the service received you can let the college know in writing through the [Feedback and Complaints procedure](#).

How to Apply for Financial Support

- If you feel you are eligible for support please apply online through our [online application portal](#). We will let you know by email/letter within 10 working days (15 days during the Summer and Autumn Terms) whether or not your application has been successful or if we need further evidence.

The content of this guide is not exhaustive and is for guidance purposes only and may be subject to change at any time.

Version 5 - November, 2025