



16-19 Bursary Fund and Free College Meal Application Guidance (2026/27)

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is a government funded scheme to help support young people who face the greatest financial barriers to education. Each bursary award gives consideration to individual student needs. Funds are limited so students are advised to apply as early as possible.

Bursary funding is intended to help students with the essential costs of participating in their programme of study at college, so to help with the cost of essential books or equipment or the cost of travelling to college.

Bursary funding without Free College Meals may be awarded at 3 levels, depending on household income. If you are entitled to Free College Meals (FCM) you may also receive a top up bursary payment.

The amounts payable will also depend on the number of days per week that you are required to attend college. If your attendance falls below 95% of the required days, your bursary will be reduced.

In addition, students who are eligible for either Vulnerable or Discretionary Bursary may be able to apply for support with travel costs if they are **not eligible** for the 'Our Pass' travel pass which operates throughout Greater Manchester (if you live outside the GM area or are no longer eligible due to age)

The bursary cannot be used to support costs that are not related to education, extra-curricular or non-compulsory activities which are not essential to your study programme.

Who can apply?

- Students aged 16-18
- Students aged 19+ who are in the second year of a course that they started when aged 16-18
- Students aged 19-24 who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Students must have lived in the UK for at least 3 years before the start of their course.
- Asylum seekers can apply for Free College Meals and the College may provide equipment and travel passes as necessary.

CHILDCARE SUPPORT

The bursary fund may be used to provide exceptional further help to students aged 16-19 years of age who have parental responsibility, with childcare costs if the cost exceed the Care to Learn scheme's weekly maximum rates. Childcare provision must meet Care to Learn scheme eligibility rules, and evidence would be required that the maximum amount is already paid through that scheme and a top up is required. Any top up must be made in line with Care to Learn funding rules and paid directly to the childcare provider. Further details of the Government funded Care to Learn scheme and how to apply can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>. Young parents are expected to access any entitlement they may have for 15 or 30 hours free childcare for 2, 3 and 4 year olds before applying for funding from Care to Learn. More information is available on the gov.uk website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare--2>)

What are the different types of Bursary?

PRIORITY 1 - VULNERABLE STUDENT BURSARY

Students who fall into any of the 'Vulnerable Student' categories below could receive **up to** £1,200 per year to support travel and study costs. The amount awarded is dependent on your financial need.

The 'Vulnerable Student' Bursary is not available to **any** student aged 19 or over.

In addition to the vulnerable bursary, students in these categories may be entitled to Free College Meals if in receipt of the appropriate benefits.

A bursary award could be removed at any time if attendance and behaviour do not meet our required standard.

Vulnerable Student Categories	Evidence Required
Student receives Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) in their own name and living independently (not with parents/family)	Latest IS or UC award letter issued since April 2026
Student is in or has recently left Local Authority Care	A letter to confirm your status from the Local Authority (LA) that looks after you
Student who receives Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own name and living independently (not with parents/family)	Latest award letter to confirm your ESA/UC and DLA/PIP issued since April 2026

PRIORITY 2 – FREE COLLEGE MEALS AND ADDITIONAL DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT

Your Household is in receipt of:	Evidence Required
Income-related Employment Support Allowance (ESA)	Latest award letter issued since April 2026
Universal Credit (UC)	3 most recent Universal Credit award letters
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	A copy of a letter from the National Asylum Support Service which confirms your status.
Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit	Latest State Pension Credit Award Notice or letter issued since April 2026

Free College Meals are accessed via your student ID card at the cafeteria tills and can also be topped up with additional cash funds via your college Wisepay account.

Free College Meal allowances are £5.00 per day and are only available on the day they are issued (any amount not used by the end of the day is cleared and a new allowance made available for the following day). The College offers a wide range of hot and cold meals including breakfast.

Students in receipt of Free College Meals could also receive additional support for travel and study costs depending on an assessment of need.

The amounts payable will also depend on the number of days per week that you are required to attend College. If your attendance falls below 95% of the required days, your bursary will be reduced.

Asylum seekers cannot receive additional payments, but can receive assistance with equipment, travel cards etc. which the College may purchase on your behalf.

A bursary award could be removed at any time if attendance and behaviour do not meet our required standard.

PRIORITY 3 – DISCRETIONARY BURSARY ONLY

Students in this category can receive support for travel, meal and study costs depending on an assessment of need – categories of support are outlined on the application form.

Students in this group will not be eligible for Free College Meals.

A bursary award could be removed at any time if attendance and behaviour do not meet our required standard.

Income Type	Evidence Required
Earnings:	
Earnings from employment or occupational/private pension schemes	P60 for year to April 2026 or most recent 3 months payslips AND 2 months bank statements showing all income
Earnings from self-employment (including income from rental properties)	Most recent tax return or audited accounts AND 2 months bank statements showing all income
Benefits:	
State pension	Latest award letter issued since April 2026
Pension credit	Latest State Pension Credit Award Notice or letter issued since April 2026
Universal Credit	3 most recent Universal Credit award letters (full pdf documents)
Employment Support Allowance	Latest award letter issued since April 2026

The amounts payable will also depend on the number of days per week that you are required to attend college. If your attendance falls below 95% of the required days, your bursary will be reduced.

Household income up to £36,000	Household income between £36,001 and £41,000	Household income between £41,001 and £45,000
Support Band 1	Support Band 2	Support Band 3
• Reimbursement of the OurPass administration fee where applicable, or, for students not eligible for the OurPass, 100% support for travel costs. • Meals up to £800 per year (only available to students who are not eligible for Free College Meals) • Stationery costs up to £100 per year • 100% support for costs of books and equipment required for your programme of study • 100% support for essential trips which are linked directly to programme of study. • Maximum 3 trips per academic year • Loan of laptop if required	• Reimbursement of the OurPass administration fee where applicable, or, for students not eligible for the OurPass, 75% support for travel costs. • Meals up to £600 per year (only available to students who are not eligible for Free College Meals) • Stationery costs up to £75 per year • 75% support for costs of books and equipment required for your programme of study • 75% support for essential trips which are linked directly to programme of study. • Maximum 3 trips per academic year • Loan of laptop if required	• Reimbursement of the OurPass administration fee where applicable, or, for students not eligible for the OurPass, 50% support for travel costs. • Meals up to £400 per year (only available to students who are not eligible for Free College Meals) • Stationery costs up to £50 per year • 50% support for costs of books and equipment required for your programme of study • 50% support for essential trips which are linked directly to programme of study. • Maximum 3 trips per academic year • Loan of laptop if required

Note that overseas trips can only be supported in exceptional circumstances and where the relevant experience cannot be achieved in the UK

Payment of Bursaries

Bursary awards will be paid into the student's bank account on the last Friday of each month from September to June, subject to attendance criteria being met.

Payments cannot be made into an account which does not belong to the student.

Attendance below 95% could result in bursary funds being reduced/removed.

Application Process

- Applications should be made online via your myLoreto account which is available after you have enrolled – the link to the application system is accessed via the 'INFO' then 'FINANCE' options under your id photo. If you have any queries please email bursary@loreto.ac.uk, visit the Bursary Officer in Room BG13 or phone 0161 342 0389 (please be aware that the team are very busy in the Autumn Term). We accept applications throughout the year but funds are limited so awards are not guaranteed.
- Applicants should complete the process in full and evidence of circumstances/household income must be provided. Failure to submit adequate supporting evidence will result in applications being returned. If you do not have the necessary documents available the system will save your application and you can go back to it to add documents later. Bursary awards cannot normally be backdated so it is important that applicants provide all the information as soon as possible.
- Each application will be individually assessed by the Bursary Officer depending on financial need and available funds.
- When your application has been assessed the status of your application on myLoreto will change and you will be notified by the system.
- If a student who has received bursary funding leaves College prior to the completion of their course, they may be required to repay all or part of the award.
- If attendance or achievement does not meet our expectations awards may be withheld for a set period until any issues are resolved. We treat all students as individuals and any decision to suspend or stop bursary funding will be considered by the Head of Hall and the Bursary Officer.
- Funding is discretionary and the policy is subject to change.
- If you do not have the specified documents but you are living in a low income household and need help with essential costs associated with studying at College, please contact the Bursary Officer by email bursary@loreto.ac.uk

What if an application is unsuccessful?

- Appeals can be made up to 10 working days from the date of the email notifying the outcome of an application. Appeals should be sent to bursary@loreto.ac.uk for the attention of Head of Finance, stating the reasons for appeal and including any supplementary information. Appeals will normally be reviewed within 10 working days of receipt. The Head of Finance's decision is final and the College will notify students of the outcome in writing.