

# Higher Education Bursary Guidance

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## 1 Purpose

### Access and Participation Plan at York College

York College recruits predominantly from the local area. The College performs well with many aspects of widening participation, namely students with disabilities, mature entrants and those with a non-standard entry tariff. York College is committed to equality of opportunity. The aim is to create an environment in which people treat each other with mutual respect, regardless of age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender identity, transgender, sexual orientation, trade union activity or unrelated criminal convictions.

### Our academic support and commitment to HE students

We provide academic skills coaching that can support the continuation and attainment of all students and be based in our University Centre. We will continue small group workshops and 1-1 support for all students to meet their individual needs

## Our financial commitment to HE students

The Bursary Scheme takes the form of £600 funding (£300 for part-time students) per student to support students with costs associated with their studies.

The purpose of the Higher Education Bursary is to:

- help students overcome financial barriers in order to access higher education.
- support and retain these students
- promote a positive attitude to learning.

Higher Education bursaries are available in addition to funding from national funding bodies and hardship funding.

## **2 Statement of Principles**

- Funding is based on financial need and other factors affecting access to Higher Education – see section 5
- Funding will be applied fairly and consistently
- The process will be easy to understand and accessible to students
- The scheme is designed to maximise the number of students supported whilst providing sufficient funding for students to be able to access Higher Education, continue with their programme and succeed.

## **3 Statement of Practice**

Academic Performance	No academic misconduct issues
Discipline	No payments will be made if the recipient is excluded from College
Frequency of Payment	One-off or two termly payments – see section 9.1

## **4 Funding Appeals Panel**

The Funding Appeals Panel will consist of:

- Director of Student Experience (Chair)
- Director of Curriculum: Professional & Commercial Industries (HE Lead)

Two members of the Panel will normally be required for a decision to be made for an appeal; no member of the panel will have been involved in the original decision. The Chair may co-opt a suitable college manager to the Panel as required.

## **5 Eligibility**

Students will be assessed each academic year and must meet the eligibility criteria in any given year to qualify for a bursary in that year.

### **5.1 General eligibility criteria**

To be eligible to receive a Higher Education Bursary, students must:

- be on a Higher Education course that is an eligible course for student finance
- have taken out any available Maintenance Loans
- be ordinarily resident in the UK on 1 September 2023

- have taken out any available tuition fee loans or be paying tuition fees of £7,200 (or equivalent pro-rated if part-time).

Higher Education Bursaries will not be paid to students:

- on Further Education courses
- on full cost provision
- on an apprenticeship
- who have their fees paid (in full or in part) through a sponsorship arrangement including by their employer
- who are enrolled on free-standing Higher Education modules.
- who have chosen not to take out available Maintenance Loans or tuition fee loans (where available)

### **5.1.1 Care Leavers**

Students are eligible for the bursary if they are aged under 25 on 1 September 2023 and were looked after for at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 and have been looked after at some time while aged 16 or 17. Care leavers who turn 25 will continue to be eligible for a bursary until the end of their programme.

Income evidence is not required however we will need evidence of your care leaving status from your social worker.

### **5.1.2 Student Carers**

Students with substantial caring responsibilities may be eligible for the bursary.

Students wishing to be assessed for the bursary as a carer will need to provide evidence to support this claim.

### **5.1.3 Income**

The is available to students with a household income from employment, self-employment or pensions below £25,000, as assessed by Student Finance England or other Higher Education funding awarding body.

Where consent has not been given by the student or their sponsor(s) for the funding awarding body to share financial information, additional income evidence will be required. All students will need to provide evidence of their maintenance loan which clearly shows their name and entitlement.

## **5.2 Repeating years of study**

Students who are required to repeat all or a part of a year of study will not normally be considered for a bursary, however, they can apply for special consideration.

## **5.3 Topping up from foundation degree**

Students who top up from a foundation degree will be considered for a bursary if they are charged fees of £7,200 (or pro-rated if part-time). Students who complete a foundation degree and then start the second year of a bachelor's degree will be considered to be repeating study for that year.

## **5.4 Transferring in from other institutions**

Higher Education students who transfer in from another institution will not normally be considered for a bursary.

## **6 Value of Awards**

The bursaries will have a value of £600 per year for full-time students or £300 per year for part time students.

## **7 Decision Making**

The criteria identified in this document are guidelines to the decision-making process. In extenuating circumstances, the College reserves the right to make awards to individual students who do not necessarily meet all of the listed criteria but can demonstrate significant barriers to their continuing education.

Bursaries for full-time students will be granted based on the information provided by Student Finance England or other Higher Education funding body. Bursaries for part-time students will be granted based on information provided by Student Finance England or other Higher Education funding body for students who are eligible for maintenance funding or an assessment by the College for those who are not. Not all students will be eligible.

The funding available is limited and awards are not guaranteed. Students who apply after the budget has been allocated will not be made an award.

Higher Education Bursary applications will not be assessed until after the October half-term.

### **7.1 Required evidence**

Both the student and their sponsor(s) will need to give consent to share information with the college when completing their student finance application in order to be assessed. If we are unable to verify household income through Student Finance England, we will require additional evidence.

Students who wish to be assessed for the bursary on the basis of their caring leavers status will need to provide evidence from their social worker or pathways worker that they meet the definition of care leaver.

Students who wish to be assessed for the bursary based on being a carer will need to provide evidence of their caring responsibilities, this could be from a social worker, the local carers centre or their GP.

### **7.2 Notification**

Students will normally be notified of their eligibility by email after a verified income assessment is available from Student Finance England.

## **8 Payment**

### **8.1 Payment dates**

Bursaries will be paid as a one-off or termly depending on a student's course and situation.

Students who are on courses that require a significant up-front investment in equipment will be able to access their bursary in full after October half-term, pending assessment.

All other students will normally receive their bursary in equal payments around the following dates:

- Term 1 November 2023
- Term 2 March/April 2024

## **8.2 Method of payment**

Funding will normally be paid by BACS payments to the student, in certain circumstances all or part of the payment may be in cash.

## **Conditions for payment**

Students must meet the conditions outlined in the Statement of Practice to receive payments.

In addition, students will need to:

- have had a verified income assessment by Student Finance England or other Higher Education funding body, if full-time or eligible part-time
- have had an income assessment by York College, if part-time and not eligible for maintenance
- provided any other evidence as requested
- be enrolled and in attendance on a York College Higher Education programme.

If a student leaves York College, they will not be eligible for any further payments. Any payments that have been made will not normally be recovered.

## **8.3 Deadline for payment**

All payments must be made by 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

## **8.4 Suspension of studies**

Where a student suspends their studies, bursary payments will also be suspended. Students will then be reassessed when they resume their studies, however students will need to reapply if their return date occurs within a new academic year.

## **8.5 Withdrawal from programme of studies**

Where a student withdraws before receiving the full amount of their bursary, they will not normally receive any amount that has not already been paid. Students will not normally be required to repay any funds they have already received, although York College reserves the right to claim back any funds.

## **8.6 Transferring programmes within college**

Students who transfer from one eligible programme in college to another will remain eligible for their bursary and any payments will be made in line with the agreed payment profile.

## **9 Appeals**

All applicants have the right of appeal. Students who wish to appeal will need to write to the Director of Student Experience, stating clearly the reasons for appeal and giving any additional details they think should be taken into consideration.

Appeals will be considered by members of the Funding Appeals Panel; no member of the Panel will have been involved in the original decision. The Chair of the Appeals Panel may co-opt a suitable College manager to sit on the Panel as required. Notification of the outcome of the appeal will be within 10 working days of the Panel meeting taking place.

Students who remain unhappy with the outcome can then appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Further details of the process can be found at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx>.

## **10 False or Fraudulent Applications**

Where students are found to have intentionally given misleading or inaccurate information York College will claim back the award made. Providing false statements may result in the student being sanctioned in accordance with the York College Disciplinary Policy and/or prosecution.

In accordance with the College's Fraud Policy, a record will be made of fraudulent incidents, and subsequent actions taken. These incidents will be reported to the Strategic Leadership Team both as they occur and through an annual report.