

## **19+ and Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund Policy 2025/26**

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## 1.0 Introduction

The College receives an allocation for the 19+ Bursary Fund and for the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund for learners for 2025-26 and this document sets out how the College intends to administer and distribute funds. The College policy follows the Skills Fund Agency guidance. Learner eligibility will be determined through assessments of the student's social and economic disadvantage. Both Bursary funds may be used to fund hardship and childcare, but the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund does not fund tuition or exam fees. Hardship support can include course related costs (such as books, equipment, trips), travel or support with domestic emergencies.

## 2.0 Purpose

North Devon College recognises that the 19+ Bursary and the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Funds have an important role to play in removing barriers for some learners accessing and completing further education courses. It is the aim of the College to use funds to make the maximum impact on recruitment, attendance, retention, achievement and success rates. It is the policy of the college to optimise the use of the Bursary Funding to provide support to those learners facing the greatest financial barriers to continuing in Education.

## 3.0 Eligibility

### 3.1 For 19+ Bursary Fund:

To be eligible to receive this bursary, the learner must be aged over 19 on 31 August 2025 and enrolled on a full time or part time course at North Devon College who meets one of the following criteria:

- a) In receipt of one of the means tested benefits listed below (or be a dependent partner of a person receiving one of the benefits below *and* included in that benefit award).
  - Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit
  - Income Support
  - Employment Support Allowance (Income Related)
  - Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based)
  - Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
  - Universal Credit (subject to status)
  - Working Tax Credit (with an annual income for the previous year showing on the award of under £16,190.00)
- b) On a low income. A low income is defined as:
  - Single learners with an annual income of no more than £30,000
  - Lone parents or couples with an annual income of no more than £45,000 (plus an additional £2,000 for each dependent child aged under 19 and in full time education)
- c) For help with course fees only

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- A household income of no more than £60,000 (plus an additional £2,000 for each dependent child aged under 19 and in full time education).

### 3.2 Learners not eligible:

There are certain categories of learners that are not able to claim bursary support funds. These are:

- Learners who are considered to be Overseas Learners.
- Learners on a Higher Education course
- Apprenticeship Learners
- Learners on a recreational programme or non-Government funded courses
- Learners who are 19 and over who are studying a level 3 or above course and are not claiming their first level 3 entitlement remission
- Learners aged 19 to 25 who are funded under the 16-19 Bursary Fund.
- Learners with an approved Advanced learner Loan as these learners can apply for the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary.
- Learners who have been declined an Advanced Learner Loan.

### 3.3 For Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund:

To be eligible to receive this bursary, the learner must be aged over 19 on 31 August 2025 and enrolled on a full time or part time course at North Devon College and who has been granted an Advanced Learning Loan, and who meets one of the following criteria listed below:

- a) In receipt of one of the means tested benefits listed below (or be a dependant partner of a person receiving one of the benefits below *and* included in that benefit award):
  - Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit
  - Income Support
  - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
  - Employment Support Allowance (Income Related)
  - Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based)
  - Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
  - Universal Credit (subject to status)
  - Working Tax Credit (with an annual income for the previous year showing on the award of under £16,190.00)
- b) On a low income. A low income is defined as:
  - Single learners with an annual income of no more than £25,000
  - Lone parents or couples with an annual income of no more than £35,000.00 (plus an additional £2,000 for each dependent child aged under 19 and in full time education)

### 3.4 Learners not eligible:

There are certain categories of learners that are not able to claim bursary support funds. These are:

- Learners who are considered to be Overseas Learners.
- Learners on a Higher Education course
- Apprenticeship Learners

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- Learners on a recreational programme or non-Government funded courses
- Learners who have been declined an Advanced Learner Loan

### 3.5 Timetable for applications to be received:

Completed application forms with all the required information should be submitted online, ideally before the course starts. In-year applications will be accepted. Applications will be assessed and approved when the qualifying evidence of income/benefit is submitted to the Advice and Guidance Team. Applications for bus passes will be actioned within 1 week of receipt of all of the correct information. Learner's payments are conditional on complying with the attendance criteria as laid out in the Attendance and Punctuality Policy. Learners' attendance will be checked after 3 weeks, with an expectation that this will be at 100%. If this is in place, Bursary will then be paid. If a learner falls below 100% attendance in the first 3 weeks, the learner will then need to demonstrate improvement. As soon as a learner records 100% attendance over a week period, bursary will then be paid. Emergency applications due to sudden change of circumstances should be made to the Advice and Guidance Team as soon as possible, where they will be considered.

### 3.6 Support Available:

#### 3.6.1 Registration and Examination Fees (19+ Bursary Fund only):

The Bursary Fund will cover 100% of the fees.

#### 3.6.2 Tuition Fees & Exam Fees (19+ Bursary Fund only):

The Bursary Fund will cover 100% of the fees.

#### 3.6.3 Transport:

Learners can apply for help with a bus pass or a contribution towards fuel costs if they live more than 3 miles from the campus.

#### 3.6.4 Bus Pass:

The cost of a bus pass will be covered for adult Learners who live more than 3 miles from college. Applications for a bus pass are to be made online on their MyPetroc account.

#### 3.6.5 Fuel:

For adult learners who live more than 3 miles from college a contribution of £1000 (pro-rata) can be made towards the cost of fuel for learners who wish to drive into college. This will be made in 2 allocations, one in the Autumn Term and one in the Spring Term.

#### 3.6.6 Learners with Disabilities:

Transport costs for Learners with disabilities who cannot access public transport can be applied for up to a maximum of £1000 per year.

#### 3.6.7 Equipment, Books, Studio Fees, DBS and Materials Fee:

The course tutor must supply the Advice and Guidance Centre with a detailed breakdown of equipment and general course costs. Under these circumstances support can be given up to 100% of the full cost of equipment. This will be paid

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once it has been established that the learner has met the attendance criteria as laid out by the Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

#### **3.6.8 Free Lunch:**

A meal up to the value of £3.50 can be obtained from the college food outlets for each day attending college. Eligible learners will use their learner ID card to access this.

#### **3.6.9 Specialist Equipment for Learners with Disabilities:**

There is no ceiling in this category, but an assessment will be made based on individual needs. Any equipment purchased under this category will be for the exclusive use of the learner during their time at college. On completion of the course the equipment will remain with the college.

#### **3.6.10 Educational Visits/Trips/ Residential**

80% of the cost of trips organised as part of the learner's programme can be covered up to a maximum of £100 in total and 80% of the cost of a residential organised as part of the learner's programme can be covered up to a maximum of £500 in total. The learner is required to provide evidence of the trip to the Advice and Guidance Team once they have paid their deposit.

#### **3.6.11 Childcare Support:**

The Bursary Funds cover up to 90% of childcare fees for each day the learner is attending college with the maximum amount being £300 per week per child. Learners will be required to pay a 10% contribution towards the cost of their childcare. Childcare support can be used to support the costs of any form of formal registered childcare. This includes nursery, crèche, and childminder or out of school hours place. Childcare costs cannot be paid to people who are not OFSTED registered e.g. to friends or relatives. All childcare costs will be paid directly to the registered person/organisation. Childcare payments will normally only be made during term time, to cover sessions when the learner is attending their course.

#### **3.6.12 Discretionary Payments:**

Learners who are in need of additional funds to support their attendance at college, may be able to access help via discretionary payments. This part of the Bursary fund can be discussed with the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team, who can authorise assistance for learners to meet their immediate needs. If you require their assistance or wish to discuss your requirements, please contact them on 01271 852468 at Barnstaple or 01884 235350 at Tiverton or the Advice and Guidance Team on at Barnstaple on 01271 852422 or Tiverton on 01884 235245.

#### **3.6.13 General note:**

All Bursary funds are given on the understanding that a learner:

- Has met the attendance criteria as laid out by the Attendance and Punctuality Policy and
- Is making good progress and
- Completes the course and
- There are funds available.

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If any of the above criteria is not met, then the learner will be liable to pay back any financial awards made to them from the Bursary Fund. All allocations are made subject to funds being available as this is a finite fund there may be occasions when applications are reduced to allow fair allocations of the funds.

#### **4.0 Internal decision-making process and appeal process**

The College will base eligibility decisions on the information on the Bursary Fund application form and the supporting documentation provided by the learner.

The College has set income thresholds which can be supported by identifiable evidence and documentation from the learners i.e. Tax/Universal Credit Award Notice or P60/Self-Assessment.

Appeals received by the College against a Bursary Fund allocation or decision will be heard by the Tutorial, Enrichment and Progression Manager, who was not directly involved in the original decision-making process.

#### **5.0 Learner Information**

The College website will contain all the relevant and up-to-date information required to understand and complete the 19+ Bursary and the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary application process and the Bursary Agreement.

#### **6.0 Attendance**

Learner's payments are conditional on complying with the attendance criteria as laid out in the Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

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## **Appendix A: Appeals Procedure for all Bursaries**

Learners have the right to appeal against any decision made in connection with their Bursary Fund.

Learners wishing to appeal should put the details of their concern in writing. The appeals panel will be convened within 5 working days.

The appeals panel will consist of the Tutorial, Enrichment and Progression Manager and a member of the Wellbeing and Safeguarding Team. The outcome of the appeal panel will be given in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of the learner's appeal.

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