

# **Higher Education Bursary and Hardship Fund: Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Q) What is the Higher Education bursary?**

The purpose of the Higher Education Bursary is to:

- Help students overcome financial barriers to access higher education
- Promote a positive attitude to learning

Students who receive the bursary may use it to help pay for travel costs or buy essential equipment for their course. Students must apply for the maximum level of means-tested maintenance loan and tuition fee loan available to them to be considered for a bursary. Please note that not everyone who applies will be eligible.

## **Q) Will I be eligible for the bursary?**

If you are studying on a Higher Education course and your household income is below £35,000 per year, you should be eligible for bursary funding. HE Bursaries are assessed based on the information provided by the Student Loan Company (SLC). Both the student and their sponsor(s) will need to give consent to share information with the college when completing their student finance application to be assessed. If we are unable to verify household income through SLC, we will require additional evidence.

## **Q) How do I apply for a bursary?**

All students must complete an application form in each new academic year. The link to the application form will be available via Microsoft Teams in the HE Essentials group and on the bursary page of the college website. HE Bursary applications are processed in October half-term.

## **Q) I had a bursary last year. Do I need to apply again?**

Yes. You must submit a new bursary application for each academic year and funding is not guaranteed. You will need to provide up-to-date income/benefits evidence to support your application if we are unable to verify your household income through SLC.

## **Q) What might I get?**

If eligible, full-time students will receive £800 and part-time students will receive £400. This payment is usually made in two instalments, one in the first term (November) and the second around Easter.

**Q) I've been asked to provide evidence of my household income. Who is considered as in my household and what do I need to provide?**

<b>If you are:</b>	<b>Please provide income/benefits evidence for:</b>	<b>Please note:</b>
a) Living at home with parents/carers and were <b><u>under the age of 25</u></b> on the <b>first day of your course</b> .	All parents/carers, including any stepparents and/or partners of mum/dad, that live in the same house as you.	If you are <b><u>under 25</u></b> and have your own income (e.g. part-time job), but you are still living at home with parents/carers, we do not need to see your own income, just your parents/carers.
b) Living at home with parents/carers and were <b><u>over the age of 25</u></b> on the <b>first day of your course</b> and not working or claiming benefits	All parents/carers, including any stepparents and/or partners of mum/dad, that live in the same house as you.	We will contact you via email if we require further evidence.
c) Living at home with parents/carers and were <b><u>over the age of 25</u></b> on the <b>first day of your course</b> and working/claiming benefits in your own right.	Yourself.	If you are <b><u>over 25</u></b> and have your own income, we do not need to see income evidence for parents/carers, even if you still live with them.
c) <b><u>Under 25</u></b> on the first day of your course and now living either independently or with a partner	Yourself, and a partner if you live with one.	Please provide a copy of your tenancy agreement.
d) <b><u>Over 25</u></b> on the first day of your course and living either independently or with a partner.	Yourself, and a partner if you live with one.	We will contact you via email if we require further evidence.

What we need will vary depending on your household circumstances. Please see the table below to identify what you will need to provide:

Eligibility criteria	Evidence Required
Claiming benefits <b>only</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits letter dated within the current tax year <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Universal Credit statement ensuring we can see the claimants name and the dates at the top of the statement and covering all the way down to 'total payment for this month', including details of entitlements and deductions (if any).</li> </ul>
Employed <b>and not claiming benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly pay: most recent pay slip <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Weekly pay: 4 x most recent pay slips</li> </ul>
Employed <b>and claiming benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits letter dated within the current tax year <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Universal Credit statement ensuring we can see the claimants name and the dates at the top of the statement and covering all the way down to 'total payment for this month', including details of entitlements and deductions (if any) <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Monthly pay: most recent pay slip <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Weekly pay: 4 x most recent pay slips</li> </ul>
Self-employed <b>and not claiming benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most recent self-assessment tax return as submitted to HMRC. This needs to show your name and address.</li> </ul>
Self-employed <b>and claiming benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits letter dated within the current tax year <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Universal Credit statement ensuring we can see the claimants name and the dates at the top of the statement and covering all the way down to 'total payment for this month', including details of entitlements and deductions (if any) <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Most recent self-assessment tax return as submitted to HMRC. This needs to show your name and address.</li> </ul>
Retired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of State pension, P60 for any private pensions and confirmation of pension credit (if applicable).</li> </ul>

**Q) What is the Higher Education Hardship Fund?**

The Hardship Fund can provide additional support to higher education students who experience unexpected financial difficulty during their course. Funding is limited and applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Students wishing to apply to the HE Hardship Fund should speak to the Funding Team in the first instance. This is so we can fully explain what the procedure is and what evidence is needed based on their individual circumstances.

**Q) I'm unhappy with the decision that's been made regarding my bursary/hardship application. Can I appeal?**

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