

Learner Support (DfE Adult Skills Fund) and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) fund policy for the 19+ Access to Industry Award 2025/26

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1. Introduction

The Manchester College is committed to supporting students in accordance with the Adult Skills Fund and GMCA rules and regulations. The purpose of this Policy is to help you understand the purpose and scope of the available financial support.

The 19+ Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

2. Scope and purpose

The policy details how The Manchester College will offer financial support to Students across the College through the Learners Support Fund mechanism. DfE (Adult Skills Fund)

Financial support will be offered to:

- 19+ learners studying an DfE (Adult Skills Fund) funded programme of study including those who are funded through an Advanced Learner Loan with a household income of £35,000 (Travel) or £25,000 (Childcare or any additional bursary elements)

The LSF helps to provide financial support towards the cost of studying and more specifically will offer support for:

- Tuition fees
- Accreditation/Exam fees
- Childcare
- Travel
- Personal Hardship (clothing, personal care etc.)
- Free Tea and toast (on arrival from 8:00am until 9:30am)

2.1 Policy

The LSF funds are limited and not guaranteed, and these will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and will close when the full allocation has been spent. The fund will be reviewed on a Monthly basis. The college reserve the right to adjust the criteria in year according to funds available, individual needs and personal circumstances of individual students.

2.2 EU and EEA students

Now The United Kingdom (UK) has left the European Union (EU) and free movement between the UK and the EU has now ended. All EU/EEA nationals must show EU pre-settlement or settlement to be eligible for funding unless they fall into one of the exempt categories. All EU/EEA new arrivals will be deemed as international unless special exemptions apply. All Irish citizens continue to be automatically eligible for funding under immigration concessions agreed with the Irish Government before the UK was a member of the EU.

2.3 Tuition fee support

Learners can apply for tuition fee support if not eligible for DfE (Adult Skills Fund) tuition fee remission categories. As per Appendix 1.

2.4 Examination/Accreditation fee support

Learners who must pay an Examination/Accreditation fee can apply for assistance with this from the funds as per Appendix 1. Or via the Hardship provision by speaking with the Welfare Team.

2.5 Childcare support

Learners who incur childcare costs with an Ofsted regulated childcare provider whilst studying can apply for assistance from this fund. The level of childcare funding available to a learner will be determined by other sources of childcare support available through government led initiatives, such as the 15-30 hours of free childcare for 9 months to 3 years, eligibility applies.

The maximum childcare funding available to learners will be as follows:

For children age from 9 months, if eligible

- The learner is expected to pay 5% of the nursery place directly to the provider (this does not include Asylum Seekers).
- The college will pay a maximum of £175.00 per week.

For children aged 2 years and under 11 years:

- The college will support any additional childcare hours above the NEG hours voucher up to a maximum of £175.00 per week, per child.
- The learner is expected to pay 5% of the nursery place directly to the provider (this does not include Asylum Seekers).

Where a learner has children both under and over 2 years of age, the maximum that the college will pay is £350 per week.

Any childcare costs incurred by a learner before they have official written confirmation from the college that childcare funding has been agreed, will remain the learner's liability to pay the nursery provider. Refusal to pay the 5% contribution may lead to funds being withdrawn.

The signed contract will need to be fully completed with all relevant information agreed for utilising the NEG vouchers against the childcare whilst studying at The Manchester College.

The Attendance is monitored and acted on in relation to the contract. If a student leaves their course, they may incur a notice period cost from the childcare provider. The college will give and pay a notice period according to the terms and conditions of the childcare provider.

For learners who may incur a registration fee from a provider, the college will support this cost via the hardship provision (breaking barriers). Breaking Barriers (Hardship) cannot be used to supplement childcare costs in full. Applications are checked and verified by the Careers and Welfare Team and processed by The Bursary Team.

Section 5 of the application should be completed and signed by the Ofsted registered childcare provider.

2.6 Travel award - as per Appendix 1.

Learners from low-income households and studying on a substantial programme of 08 hrs or more per week can apply for support with the cost of travel. The travel award will be provided to learners based on eligibility. Payments and support may stop if attendance falls below college expectations.

Your travel award will now operate an ITSO card which will be the college ID badge. This will be used on public transport as a travel card. Students will be able to renew the travel award every 28 days using a smart phone at the main campus reception.

Students who lose or misplace the bus pass will incur a fee of £2 to obtain a replacement from the bus company. Refunds are not available if a bus pass is later found. Whilst the bus pass is being replaced, there will be no replacement funds available. If the learner is experiencing severe hardship, they can speak with The Welfare Team about a temporary bus pass. Any Student found misusing their bus pass will be subject to the student disciplinary procedures. In cases where students have lost their ID up to 3 or more times, the college will adjust the award to daily scratch cards.

Any student who lives outside the GM area or is studying under the 08-hour threshold and needs travel support must email the Bursary Team BursaryTeam@tmc.ac.uk explaining why they should be considered for OUT OF AREA travel support. This will be looked at by the Bursary Appeals Panel and a decision reached. The Manchester College is committed to removing any barriers a student faces to attend and progress in the college. The Manchester College will provide a travel package designed to get students to college using the variety of transport means available. For students who live outside the GM travel area OR there are good reasons why bus travel is not appropriate, the following criteria will apply.

- An income threshold of below £35,000 per annum
- Living outside the GM area
- A valid UK bank account where applicable
- Have good reasons why bus travel is not appropriate

When making an appeal, the learner can indicate what their specific needs are and why they need alternative means of getting to a college campus. Students will retain the TMC GO travel pass, where appropriate, and the college will adjust the award to include Bus/Train or Bus/Tram. In most cases this will be capped at £70 per month but will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. Students may be referred to the Welfare Team to look at a needs assessment.

In cases where a payment into a UK bank account is necessary The Manchester College will pay the relevant, reasonable amount as a BACS payment (this may be applicable for Tram/Train travel). The student will be expected to choose the most efficient mode of transport available when choosing their transport package. This will be determined at the appeal stage and will be checked when processing. Students may be required to attend an assessment interview to discuss travel options.

In cases where a student has a disability or health condition including SEND/EHCP, the college will work with students on the best mode of travel support.

In cases where a student has been paid using the BACS system, the student may be asked to provide evidence that a Train ticket has been purchased. The Manchester College will provide the students with the tools to plan their journey to college and take advantage of any free transport available.

<https://tfgm.com/plan-a-journey>
<https://www.firstbus.co.uk/greater-manchester>
<https://tfgm.com/public-transport/tram/ticket-prices>
<https://www.systemonetravel.co.uk>

FREE BUS TRAVEL AROUND THE CITY CENTRE

Manchester City Centre has a free bus service 1,2 and 3 that operate around the city centre. All buses are wheelchair accessible.

<https://tfgm.com/public-transport/bus/free-bus>

When students are traveling by train into Manchester Central, they can use the train ticket to also travel on the tram within zone 1, without the need of purchasing additional tickets.

2.7 Meal allowances

Tea and Toast

Students aged 19 years and above will receive free tea and toast for the days in college and arriving between 8:00am until 9:30. As part of the college commitment to healthy living, alongside the free breakfast provision, we will make fruit and bottled water available to all students which can be collected in and around the main reception area twice per week. This will continue through the academic year, depending on funds.

Students who are the most vulnerable and part of the lowest income levels can book an appointment with the welfare team, to discuss possible college meals awards via the hardship provision (breaking barriers). Any awards will be reviewed on a regular basis and the college reserves the right to stop awards where it is felt it's no longer required. Based on need, the college may continue to pay for meals during periods of time when students are not in college, such as half term etc. This will be paid at £30 per week (this does not include the summer break). Any out of college payments are paid into a UK bank account.

2.8 19-24 Unwaged Learners

In some circumstances, for a level 1 or 2 programme of study, a learner aged 19 – 24, unwaged, may be eligible for support should a signed declaration from parents/guardian be in place, confirming that they do not financially support the learner for educational purposes (eligibility criteria apply).

2.9 College hardship funds

The college has a Hardship provision to be held centrally to support Students who experience sudden, unavoidable, and extreme hardship e.g., homelessness. Furthermore, in reaction to the cost-of-living crisis. You can apply through The Welfare team. Or by downloading the breaking barriers application from www.tmc.ac.uk/study-with-us/fees-finance-funding.

Students applying to breaking barriers will be expected to book a welfare appointment to assess need

Get Smart is designed to ensure no student is put at a disadvantaged due to lack of finances or support and will provide:

- Suitable clothes for students who are looking for work and have an interview.
- Student who may need support attending a university interview.
- Students who are progressing to Higher Education and need support with the UCAS fee.
- Childcare registration fees

The college reserves the right to stop this practice at any time depending on available funds.

2.10 Advanced Learner Loans or Skills for Jobs Fund – in Learning Support

Learners who have an Advanced Learner Loan or NSF and are eligible for financial support through the Programme of study award can receive additional support to access learning e.g. 1-1 support with a SEN learning difficulty or disability.

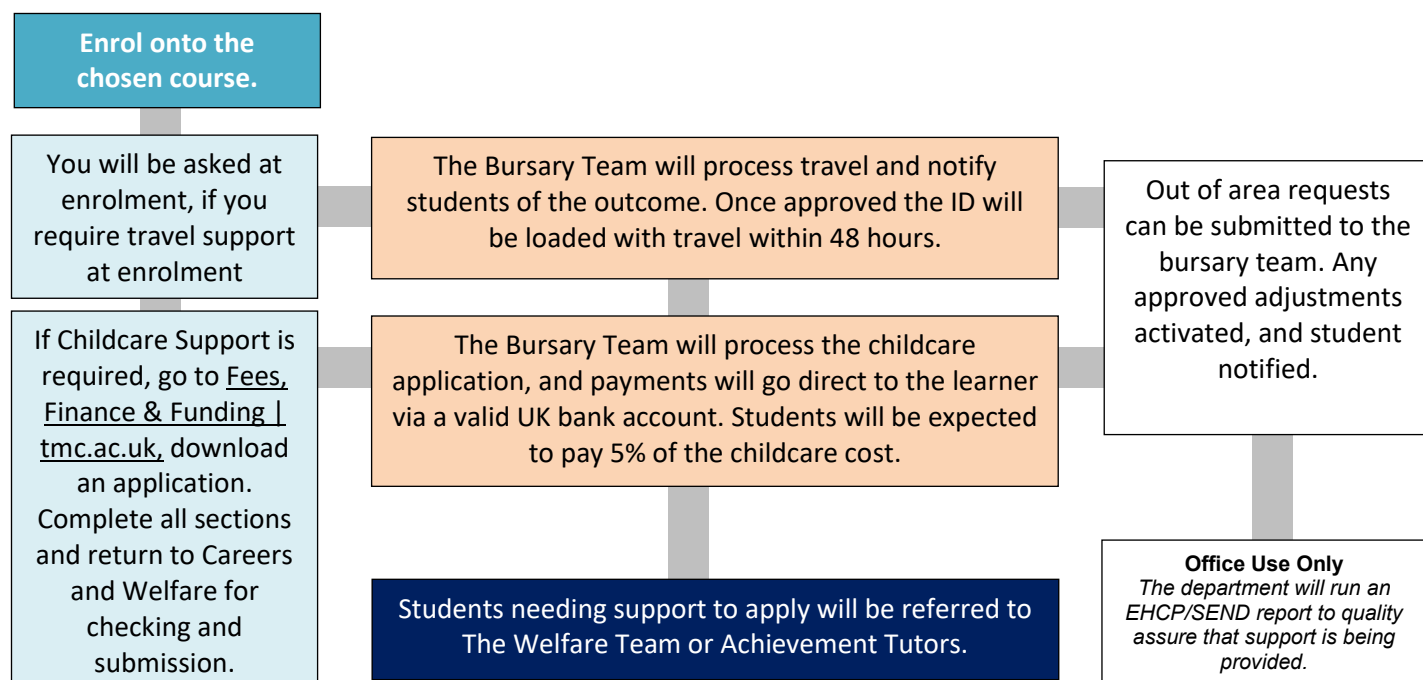
3. Application processes

Any learners wishing to apply for financial support will need to complete an application at the point of enrolment and produce proof of household income. Any learner applying after enrolment should speak with reception or The Welfare Team

Proof of household income (under £35,000 for travel or £25,000 for all other elements) can be evidenced through:

- Tax Credit Letter (Working or Child))
- Benefit Letters
- Wage slips for the last 3 months or P60
- Self-assessment tax calculation or certified accounts
- NASS Support/Aspen Card
- Bank account details

Written confirmation of the allocation will be sent within 15 working days.



3.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for an allocation a learner must be:

- Enrolled to a The Manchester College course
- Eligible for DfE (ASF) funding or in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan
- Have a good attendance Pattern in line with the college expectations
- Meet the minimum criteria relating to household income (under £35,000/£25,000)

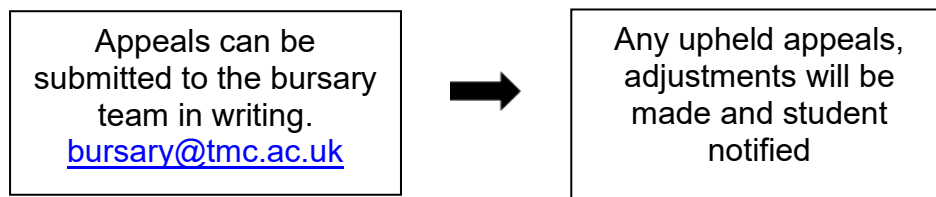
Eligibility criteria apply subject to status and all funding rules and regulations correct at time of publication.

3.2 Appeals

Should a student wish to appeal a decision, they will need to email the Bursary Team outlining why they feel the decision was incorrect OR need alternative means of transport and send this to the Bursary Team at this email address BursaryTeam@tmc.ac.uk within 10 working days of the decision date/letter.

An appeal panel will re-assess the application, and the outcome decision will be communicated within 10 working days from the date the appeal letter is received.

For all funds, Terms, Conditions, and eligibility criteria apply. All funding rules and regulations are correct at time of publication. The Manchester College reserves the right to make any changes within the academic year as appropriate.



3.3 Equality & Diversity

Learners can expect an inclusive and supportive learning environment whatever their background.

3.4 Location and access to this policy

- Student Hub
- Staff Hub
- College Website

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Are there concerns that this policy could have an adverse impact on any of these protected is action required?	If yes, is action required?
Age	NO
Disability	NO
Gender reassignment	NO
Marriage or civil partnership	NO
Race	NO
Religion	NO
Pregnancy and maternity	NO
Sex	NO
Sexual orientation	NO
EIA Summary	
Person responsible for EIA	Marie Stock
EIA Outcome & statement	
This policy outlines the Bursary (Learner Support Funds) guidance for students. All above have been taken into consideration when writing the policy to ensure all protected characteristics are not disadvantaged.	

Appendix 1 – 19+ and Advanced Learner Loans

	19 + Fully Funded Income below £35,000 travel and £25,000 for all other elements	19 + Co - Funded Income below £35,000 travel and £25,000 for all other elements	Advanced Learner Loans/NSF/GM Skills Income below £35,000 travel and £25,000 for all other elements
Tuition fee		Eligible for full tuition fee support	L3 free courses for jobs eligible for Exam Fees
Accreditation/ Examination fees		Eligible for full contribution for essential accreditation/exam fees linked to the learner's programme of study except for Professional Body registration.	Full contribution for essential accreditation/exam fees which are not included within the learning loan amount and are linked to the learner's programme of study except for Professional Body registration.
Travel	Fund bus travel costs for learners studying 08 hrs or more per week	Fund bus travel costs for learners studying 08 hrs or more per week up	Fund bus travel costs for learners studying 08 hours or more per week
Extreme Hardship i.e. homeless	To be determined on an individual case by case basis.	To be determined on an individual case by case basis	To be determined on an individual case by case basis. Via The Welfare Team and Student Experience
Childcare Support	Learners who incur childcare costs with an Ofsted regulated childcare provider whilst studying can apply for assistance with this from this fund. Maximum weekly support payments apply as stated in policy.	Learners who incur childcare costs with an Ofsted regulated childcare provider whilst studying can apply for assistance with this from this fund. Maximum weekly support payments apply as stated in policy.	Learners who incur childcare costs with an Ofsted regulated childcare provider whilst studying can apply for assistance with this from this fund. Maximum weekly support payments apply as stated in policy.
Learning Support costs			For learners in receipt of a 19+ Advanced Learner Loan OR Free courses for jobs only. Costs of meeting any additional learning needs, as assessed by the Specialist Support team, will be fully funded.