

Learner Support (ESFA) and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) fund policy for the 16 to 19 Access to Industry Award 2023/24

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INTRODUCTION

The Manchester College is committed to supporting students in accordance with the ESFA 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 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. bursaries for defined vulnerable groups.
2. discretionary bursaries which The Manchester College using policies we set, in line with these funding rules.

1 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 (ESFA).

Financial support will be offered to:

- 16-18 Students
(including Students aged 19 progressing from Year 1 to Year 2 of a 2-year enrolled programme)
- 19-24 Students with an Education Care and Health Plan (EHCP)

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

- Travel for Students (Not including Students who are eligible for the local authority “OUR PASS”)
- Free College Meals
- Free Tea and toast (on arrival from 8:00am until 9:30am)
- Personal Hardship
- Additional Support for the most vulnerable students
- Essential curriculum kits/materials and equipment
- Additional Support to remove barriers to employment and placements.

1:1 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.

The college may pay free meals during holiday periods such as Half Terms, Easter Break and Christmas as a BACS payment at the same rate as term time periods.

1:2 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.

1:3 Vulnerable Support Bursary

The most vulnerable Students are defined as: **(Evidence will be required to support the application)**

- in care (including unaccompanied Asylum Seekers)
- care leavers (including unaccompanied Asylum Seekers)
- receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner.
- receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.
- Young Caring Responsibilities

The Manchester College may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a vulnerable bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need. This might be because their financial needs are already met and/or because they have no relevant costs. The Manchester College reserves the right to refuse a student's application on this basis. Similarly, students will only receive the amount they need to participate, and the College will not automatically award students £1,200 if they do not need the full amount. Students living independently will need to provide evidence of this with a valid Tenancy agreement or Supported housing agreement.

Students studying for at least 30 weeks per year will be eligible for the vulnerable support bursary of up to, but not a guaranteed of £1,200 a year (Some travel support will be provided via the "OUR PASS") For students aged 18 on or after 31 August 2023, The Manchester college will provide travel support. All Students in receipt of the vulnerable support bursary will receive up to £1,200 made up of travel, free meals and/or any essential kits/uniforms (such as Laptop/Voucher) needed for the course.

The vulnerable support bursary is based on a financial assessment and need. Eligible Students in receipt of the vulnerable support bursary may also receive support with hardship but will only be eligible because of an assessment by the Welfare Team.

The Manchester Colleges Bursary Team will check attendance. If this falls below the college standards, The Bursary Team will speak with curriculum and support staff about reasons why the attendance has fallen. If there are genuine reasons, support will not be withheld. If there is no record/reason for not attending, support may be stopped.

2 LEARNERS SUPPORT FUNDS (LSF)

- Students aged 16-18 (Students must be under 19 on 31st August 2023 or on 31st August 2022 for Students progressing from Year 1 to Year 2 of a 2-year enrolled study programme) and with a household income under the thresholds, outlined below to be eligible for financial support as per Appendix 1. Students who become 19 during the year will continue to receive financial support until the end of the current academic year.

2:1 Free travel for 16- to 18-year-olds

The "OUR PASS" Scheme operates throughout Greater Manchester (GM) and will provide Manchester's 16-18-year old's free bus travel on all GM local bus services across the region, making it easier to access education, work, training, culture, and leisure opportunities in the city.

1. Students must be a Greater Manchester resident and aged at least 16 and under 18 on Saturday 31 August 2023.

2. There is a £10 administration fee to be paid by the student*.
3. “OUR PASS” will be valid until 31 August after the student’s 18th birthday (or until their 18th birthday, if this is 31 August).
4. Lost or stolen cards (Our Pass) will cost £10* to replace, which will not be covered by the College. Any Student found misusing their bus pass will be subject to the student disciplinary procedures.

*Students who may be in financial difficulties can make an application to the removing barriers fund from the Welfare team.

2:2 16 to 18 College travel (TMCGO)

The Manchester College Travel award will only be provided to Students who are not eligible for “OUR PASS” this will usually be students who live outside the GM area or are 18 on or after 31st August 2023. The travel award will operate on the college ID badge (which must be always visible, when on college campuses). 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 your campus reception.

Students who lose or misplace their ID/bus pass will incur a fee of **£2** to obtain a replacement from The Manchester college. 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. Any Student found misusing their bus pass will be subject to the student disciplinary procedures. Students who may be in financial difficulties can make an application to the removing barriers fund from the Welfare team.

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 are not eligible for the Our Pass or live outside the GM travel area 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
- Living within GM but not eligible for Our Pass

All eligible students will be provided with travel, loaded onto their college ID badge. In cases where a bus is not the most efficient means of travel to college, students will have the opportunity to appeal for an alternative means of travel where appropriate.

When making an appeal, the student can indicate what their specific needs are and why they need alternative means of getting to a college campus. All students will retain the TMCGO travel pass, and the college will adjust the award to include Bus/Train or Bus/Tram.

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 or Tram Voucher (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 the application. 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>

2:3 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.

2:4 Meal Allowances

2:5 EFA Free Meal Allocation

Students in receipt of a **means tested benefit, child tax credits Or Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding £7,400** are entitled up to £27.50 (depending on profile) meal allowance per week and that they are in college and when they are off-site as part of their Programme of Study e.g., when carrying out a work placement or work experience.

In cases where a student is progressing within The Manchester College and received a meal allocation. The student will continue to do so, without providing any additional evidence. The original assessment will be used to determine eligibility. This only applies when progressing from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024 academic year.

Students will receive their allocation loaded onto their ID card. Where Students cannot access the cashless vending system, such as those students on work placement or who are based in community provision, appropriate alternative payment methods will be put in place.

All payments will be operated using the BACS payment system by the Bursary Team. Attendance will be monitored, allocations reviewed on a regular basis and students informed of any changes. The College reserves the right to stop payments.

2:6 19-24 Students with Education Care and Health Plan (EHCP)

Students are entitled up to £27.50 (depending on profile) meal allowance per week that they are in college and when they are off-site as part of their Programme of Study e.g., when carrying out a work placement or work experience.

Students will receive their allocation loaded onto their ID card. Where Students cannot access the cashless vending system, such as those Students on work placement or who are based in community provision, appropriate alternative payment methods will be put in place.

All payments will be operated using the BACS payment system by the Bursary Team. Attendance will be monitored, allocations reviewed on a regular basis and students informed of any changes. The College reserves the right to stop payments.

Students will be expected to use their allocation when on college campus, using one of the refractories available, which caters for a range of tastes and requirements. If, by the end of the academic year there are any funds left on the ID card the college cannot pay this as cash to students.

In cases of severe hardship in the 2023/2024 academic year, The Manchester College will provide **food** support whilst a student attends their study programme, without undertaking the checks on household income or gathering other evidence that would normally be required. This will only apply in exceptional circumstances.

2:7 Fruit and bottled water

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.

2:8 Personal Hardship – Removing Barriers Fund

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.

2:9 Desirable Kit & Equipment

kits and equipment for a course can be funded up to the full amount depending on an income threshold of £35,000 per year and curriculum area. Purchase of kits will be operated in conjunction with curriculum areas and the Bursary Team.

All curriculum areas may have a level of kit or materials essential to the course, which will be discussed with each curriculum area.

2:10 Get Smart

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/uniforms for students who are due to start a work placement.
- Suitable clothes for students who are looking for work and have an interview.
- Students who are progressing to Higher Education and need support with the UCAS fee.

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

2:11 Laptops

If a student does not have access to a piece of IT equipment for independent study, then students can book college computers or laptops through the Libraires Laptop Lockers to work on whilst on college campus.

3 PROCESSES

Any Students wishing to apply for Students Support Funds will need to complete the APPLY portal on the college website tmc.ac.uk and upload proof of household income. The bursary team will only communicate using the student's college email account. The college will work with the college Learning Support Team to identify any students who may need additional support when applying for financial support in the college.

Proof of household income can be evidenced through:

- P60
- Tax Credit Award Letter (Child or Working)
- Benefit Award Letter
- Universal Credit
- Part IV Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed element of the State Pension Credit
- Wage slips for last 3 months.
- Self-assessment tax calculation or certified accounts
- Evidence of self-employment
- Tenancy agreement (for vulnerable support bursary)

To be eligible for an EFA Free meal allowance (**means tested benefit**) a learner must be in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income based JSA
- Income related ESA
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of the State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- WTC run-on
- Universal Credit

Where a student is in receipt of any of the above AND working tax credits, the above benefits over-ride the WTC and entitle the learner to a meal allowance.

Confirmation of the allocation will be sent to the students email within **15 working days**.

3:1 ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for an allocation Students must be:

- Aged over 16
- Aged under 19 on 31st August 2023 (or 31st August 2022 for those Students progressing to a 2nd year of a 2-year enrolled study programme)
- Aged between 19 and 24 and subject to a LDA or EHCP
- Aged 16 to 18 and enrolled to an ESF programme
- Enrolled to a The Manchester College course
- Eligible for ESFA funding
- Have a good attendance Pattern in line with the college expectations
- Meet the minimum criteria relating to household income

Young Offenders are eligible for the Learners Support Funds if they are:

- serving a non-custodial sentence
- redeemed early from a custodial sentence
- remanded to a non-secure institution
- Work based Students will only be eligible for the Learners Support Funds in exceptional circumstances.

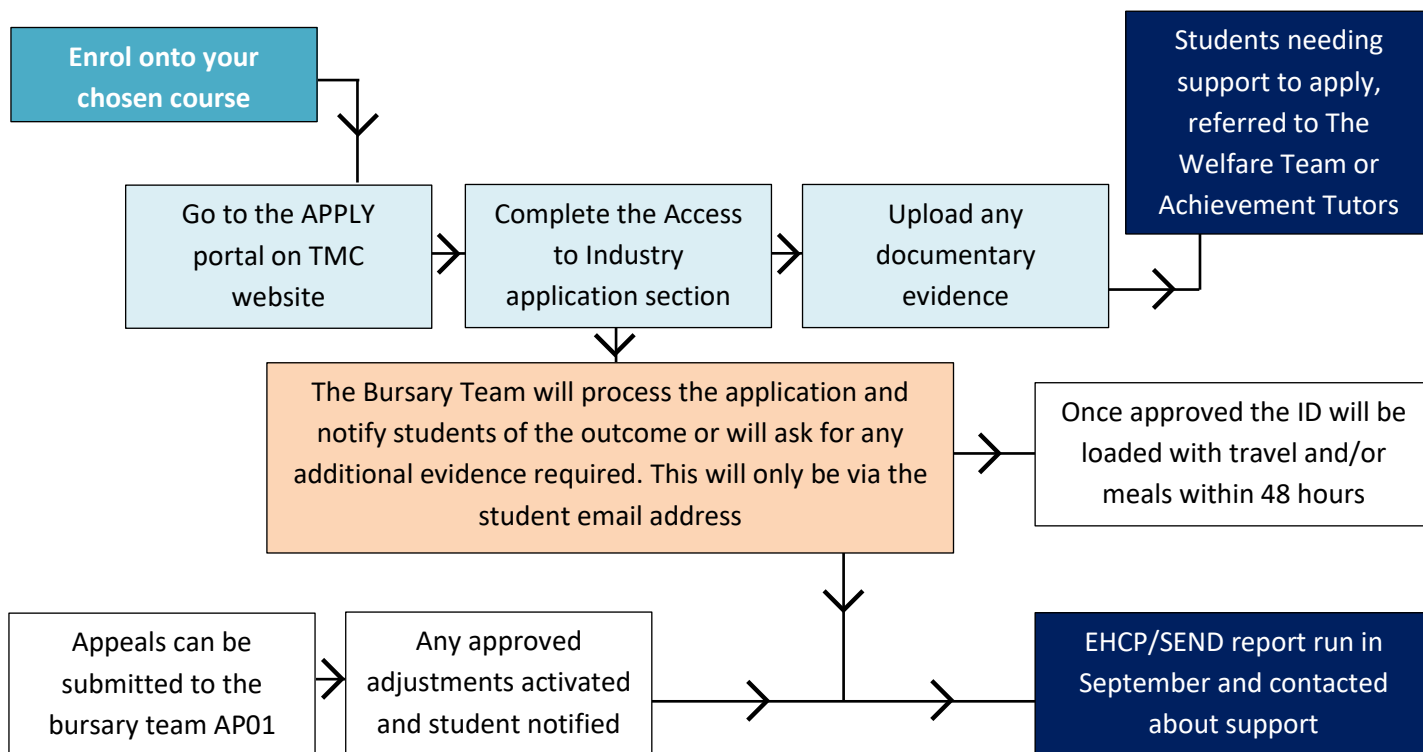
3:2 Appeals

Should a student wish to appeal a decision, they will need to put this in writing outlining why they feel the decision was incorrect and send 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 What the bursary fund cannot be used for

The bursary fund is not intended to.

- provide learning support – services The Manchester College provides to students – for example, counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring.
- support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students’ study programme.
- support general household incomes.

No cash payments can be made in 16/18 Asylum Seeker in the UK with a parent/s or guardian. We can however support unaccompanied Asylum Seekers.

The bursary cannot be used for:

- fees for access to facilities at The Manchester College
- block subsidy of the canteen
- block subsidy of transport, or support for travel for all students regardless of family incomes
- block provision of equipment, material, or books

- making bonus payments to reward attendance or achievement.
- payments to support students’ general living costs.

3:4 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Students can expect an inclusive and supportive learning environment whatever their background. This policy has been scrutinised by an Equality impact assessment.

3:5 LOCATION AND ACCESS TO THIS POLICY

Student Hub
 Staff Hub
 College Website

Appendix 1 - 16-18 Programme of Study Award

| | Income below £35,000 | Income below £35,000 |
|---|---|---|
| Travel | Only if not eligible for “OUR PASS” or living outside the GM area | N/A |
| Meal Allowance – Means Tested Benefits | N/A | EFA will fund the cost of meals whilst in college up to £27.50 per week |
| Desirable Kit and Equipment | N/A | The Manchester College will fund desirable kits and equipment based on personal circumstances and curriculum area |
| Hardship- Removing Barriers | N/A | Allocated on a case-by-case basis. Via the Welfare Team |
| Get Smart | N/A | Allocated on a case-by-case basis. Via the Welfare Team |