

Learner Support Fund Policy

16-18 ACCESS TO INDUSTRY AWARD 2022/2023

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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.

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 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”)
- Subsistence
- Free College Meals
- Personal Hardship
- Additional Support for the most vulnerable students
- Essential curriculum kit and equipment

The Manchester College also helps to provide financial support for the following:

- Breakfast to all 16- to 18-year-olds (Based on time of arrival at college, up to 9:15am)

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.

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.

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 2022, 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 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 Careers and 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.

LEARNERS SUPPORT FUNDS (LSF)

- Students aged 16-18 (Students must be under 19 on 31st August 2022 or on 31st August 2021 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.

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 2022.
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 Careers, Employability and Welfare team.

16 to 18 College travel

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 2022. Your travel award will now operate on an ITSO card which will be your 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 your campus reception.

Students who lose or misplace the ITSO 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 Careers, Employability and 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
- 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 a System One pass, 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.

In cases where a payment into a UK bank account is necessary The Manchester College will not pay above **£50 per month** (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 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>

Subsistence – Meal Allowances

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 £20 (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 2021/2022 to 2022/2023 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.

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

Students are entitled up to £20 (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.

In cases of severe hardship in the 2022/2023 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.

Personal Hardship – Removing Barriers Fund

We have increased the Hardship provision to be held centrally to support Students who experience sudden, unavoidable, and extreme hardship. Students can apply through the Careers, Employability and Welfare Team. (Application available on the college website)

Desirable Kit & Equipment

kits and equipment for a course can be funded up to the full amount depending on an income threshold of £25,000 per year and curriculum area. **Purchase of kits** will be operated in conjunction with curriculum areas and the Bursary Team.

Current allocations where specialist kit and or equipment are required:

- Catering
- Construction
- Hair and Beauty
- Travel and Tourism

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.

The Deal Award

This award is given to students who demonstrate all the professional standards and behaviours that The Deal Framework sets out. There are seven areas The Deal covers and all of them are important to the culture of our college, including being respectful, collaborative, proactive, committed, responsible, ambitious, and professional and to the skills required by employers for positive destinations into employment

Students can be nominated by Tutors, Achievement Tutors, Support Staff and Curriculum Managers and awards will be made between May and June. The award will be a cash amount transferred into a valid UK bank account. Awards can be up to £180.

PROCESS

Any Students wishing to apply for Students Support Funds will need to complete an application form and produce proof of household income.

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**.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for an allocation Students must be:

- Aged over 16
- Aged under 19 on 31st August 2022 (or 31st August 2021 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 or ESF 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.

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.

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

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

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

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

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 £25,000
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 £20 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 Careers, Employability and Welfare
The Deal Award	N/A	Up to a maximum of £180