

Student Financial Support Procedure 2026-27

19+ Bursary Fund (Including Advanced Learner Loans Bursary)

Salford City College Group

Operating principle:

Support is awarded to remove genuine financial barriers to education. Eligibility is necessary but does not, on its own, guarantee a particular award. All decisions must be based on assessed actual need, appropriate evidence, attendance/engagement expectations and available funding.

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1. Purpose and scope

This procedure sets out the financial support available to eligible 19+ students at Salford City College Group during the 2026–27 academic year. It covers the 19+ Discretionary Bursary, Advanced Learner Loan Bursary, hardship funding, 20+ Childcare Funding, Residential Access Funding, the Higher Education Student Opportunity Fund, and support with essential education-related costs.

The purpose of financial support is to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation so that they can remain in education, attend their programme, access essential resources and achieve their intended outcomes.

This procedure applies to eligible 19+ students studying on an eligible programme with Salford City College Group, including students studying with approved delivery partners where the College is responsible for administering support.

This procedure does not apply to students studying on Salford City College Group Community Education Provision unless explicitly confirmed through the relevant funding guidance or College approval process.

2. Core principles

The College will administer 19+ student financial support in line with the relevant funding guidance in force for the 2026–27 academic year. Where this procedure is silent, or where a definition requires interpretation, the relevant funding guidance will apply.

Financial support will be targeted at students with the greatest financial need and will normally be provided to meet specific participation costs. Support must relate to education and should not be used to meet general living costs, costs unrelated to learning, extra-curricular or non-compulsory activities, or to replace learning support services that should reasonably be provided through another College service.

All awards are subject to available funding. The College may amend award levels, prioritise applications, or close elements of support where funds are insufficient to meet demand.

- Eligibility must be checked before any award is confirmed.
- Actual need must be assessed for every award.
- Awards must relate to participation in education and not general living costs.
- Evidence and decision records must be retained for audit.
- Support is awarded at the College's discretion and is not an entitlement.
- Funding must not replace support that should reasonably be provided through another College service, employer, statutory service, external agency or government entitlement.
- Where a student is receiving state benefits, it is the student's responsibility to inform the Department for Work and Pensions of any financial support received from the College where this may affect their benefit entitlement.

3. Application deadlines and process

Students should submit an application and supporting evidence as soon as possible after enrolment. For students enrolling in September 2026, the deadline for bursary applications and evidence is 31 October 2026 where the student wishes to be considered for backdated support covering the enrolment and induction period.

Applications received after 31 October 2026 will still be considered, but any backdated support will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The College will consider the date the need arose, the reason for late application, whether the student was eligible during the period claimed, and whether funding remains available.

Where possible, students are encouraged to apply before enrolment so that applications can be assessed and support put in place as early as possible.

The standard application process is as follows:

1. Student completes the financial support application and declares the type of support requested.
2. Student provides evidence of household income, benefit entitlement, childcare costs, loan approval or other relevant circumstances.
3. Student Services checks general eligibility, evidence, residency and course eligibility.
4. Student Services assesses actual participation need and determines the appropriate support package.
5. The student is notified of the outcome, including any conditions, evidence still required, or reason for refusal.
6. Awards are recorded on the College management information system and supporting evidence is retained securely.

4. Assessment of actual need

The College will assess actual need before awarding support. A student may meet a category of eligibility but still receive a reduced award, or no award, where their participation costs are already met or where no relevant financial need is identified.

Assessment area	How it will be considered
Household income	Net household income, benefit entitlement and evidence of financial hardship.
Course participation	Programme hours, attendance requirements, timetable, placement requirements and whether the course is eligible for support.
Travel	Distance from college, available transport routes, number of timetabled days and whether travel costs create a barrier to attendance.
Course costs	Books, equipment, specialist clothing, protective clothing, tools, materials or other essential resources required for the study programme.
Digital access	Access to a suitable device, internet connectivity and any curriculum requirement for digital resources.
Childcare	Student age, childcare costs, childcare provider arrangements, timetable, eligibility for government-funded childcare and whether childcare costs prevent participation.
Residential need	Whether the student is required to live away from home to access an eligible programme and whether support is permitted through the relevant funding stream.

The College may use professional judgement where the evidence shows that a student has a genuine financial barrier but does not fit neatly within the standard support categories. Any exceptional decision must be recorded with the rationale and appropriate management approval.

5. General eligibility

5.1 Age

Students must normally be aged 19 or over on 31 August 2026 to be considered for 19+ student financial support in the 2026–27 academic year.

Some funding streams may have additional age requirements. For example, 20+ Childcare Funding is normally available to students aged 20 or over on the first day of learning, subject to eligibility and assessed need.

5.2 Eligible provision

Students must be enrolled on an eligible College study programme or course that is funded through an eligible adult funding stream. The College will confirm course eligibility before approving support.

Students studying on Apprenticeship programmes are not normally eligible for 19+ bursary or childcare support through this procedure.

Students studying on Higher Education programmes may be considered for the Higher Education Student Opportunity Fund where the criteria for that fund are met, but they are not normally eligible for 20+ Childcare Funding unless the relevant guidance confirms otherwise.

5.3 Residency and asylum-seeking students

Students must meet the residency and funding eligibility requirements for their programme and the relevant funding stream. The College will apply the current funding rules when assessing residency, including where immigration status or asylum status requires further consideration.

Where a student's eligibility is unclear, Student Services will review the case against the relevant funding guidance before a decision is made.

6. 19+ Discretionary Bursary

The 19+ Discretionary Bursary is for students who struggle financially with the cost of attending College and who face specific financial barriers to participation.

To be eligible to receive the 19+ Discretionary Bursary, students must normally meet the following criteria:

1. The student is aged 19 or over on 31 August 2026.
2. The student's household income is below the College's approved threshold.
3. The student is enrolled on an eligible College study programme.
4. The student has an assessed financial need linked to participation in education.
5. The student meets the College's attendance, behaviour, engagement and academic progress expectations.

The 19+ Discretionary Bursary is awarded at the College's discretion, based upon an assessment of the student's need, and is not an entitlement.

6.1 Standard Financial Criteria

The standard household income threshold for the 19+ Discretionary Bursary is less than £30,000 before tax. Household income means the income of adults living in the student's home who have financial responsibility for the student, where applicable.

The College may consider exceptional cases outside the standard threshold where evidence shows a significant barrier to participation, but approval and rationale must be recorded

6.2 Indicative Weekly Support

The following rates provide a guide only and may be subject to change depending on assessed need, attendance pattern, remote learning arrangements and available funding.

Household income	Indicative weekly bursary payment
Less than £10,000 per annum	Up to £15.00
Less than £16,000 per annum	Up to £12.50
Less than £20,000 per annum	Up to £10.00
Less than £30,000 per annum	Up to £8.00

Where remote learning is taking place, the amounts outlined above may differ.

The College reserves the right to review and amend 19+ Discretionary Bursary payments at any time. This applies to individuals as well as the wider 19+ Discretionary Bursary cohort.

7. Advanced Learner Loan Bursary

The Advanced Learner Loan Bursary provides support to eligible students who are enrolled on a course funded by an Advanced Learner Loan and who have an assessed financial need.

Students may apply for support from the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund after they receive confirmation that their Advanced Learner Loan has been approved.

To be eligible to receive the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary, students must normally meet the following criteria:

1. The student is enrolled on a college course funded by an Advanced Learner Loan.
2. The student has received a letter confirming approval of their Advanced Learner Loan.
3. The student has an assessed financial need linked to participation in education.
4. The student meets the college's attendance, behaviour, engagement and academic progress expectations.

The Advanced Learner Loan Bursary is awarded at the College's discretion, based upon an assessment of the student's need, and is not an entitlement.

If a student is receiving state benefits, it is their responsibility to inform the Department for Work and Pensions about any financial support they receive from the College, as learner support payments may affect those benefits.

7.1 Indicative Weekly Support

The following rates provide a guide only and may be subject to change depending on assessed need, attendance pattern, remote learning arrangements and available funding.

Household income	Indicative weekly bursary payment
Less than £10,000 per annum	Up to £60.00
Less than £16,000 per annum	Up to £50.00
Less than £20,000 per annum	Up to £40.00
Less than £30,000 per annum	Up to £30.00
Less than £40,000 per annum	Up to £20.00
Less than £50,000 per annum	Up to £10.00

Where remote learning is taking place, the amounts outlined above may differ.

The College reserves the right to review and amend Advanced Learner Loan Bursary payments at any time. This applies to individuals as well as the wider Advanced Learner Loan Bursary cohort.

8. Hardship Funding

Hardship funding is intended to provide financial assistance for students with specific hardship that prevents them from starting, taking part in, or continuing in learning.

Hardship funding may be used to support vulnerable and financially disadvantaged students where there is an assessed participation need. Support may include, but is not limited to:

- Travel to and from college
- Essential books and learning resources
- Essential equipment, tools or specialist clothing
- Protective clothing required for the course
- Other specific education-related costs required for participation

Hardship funding must not be used for general living costs, costs unrelated to education, non-compulsory activities, or services that should be provided through another College department or external agency.

All hardship awards must be based on assessed need, available funding and appropriate evidence.

9. 20+ Childcare Funding

The 20+ Childcare Fund is for parents who struggle financially with the cost of childcare when attending College and who are at risk of not starting or continuing learning because of childcare costs.

To be eligible to receive 20+ Childcare Funding, students must normally meet the following criteria:

1. The student is aged 20 or over on the first day of learning
2. The student's household income is less than £30,000 NET
3. The student is enrolled on an eligible college study programme
4. The student has an assessed childcare need linked to their timetable, placement or required attendance
5. The student is using an appropriate childcare provider
6. The student has used any government-funded childcare entitlement for which they are eligible, including 15 or 30 hours of free childcare where applicable

Students enrolled on Apprenticeship, Foundation Degree, Degree Top-Up, Higher National Certificate or Higher National Diploma programmes are not normally eligible for childcare funding through this fund.

Students enrolled on part-time study programmes may be eligible for pro-rata support where funding allows and assessed need is evidenced.

9.1 Childcare Support Rates

Eligible students may receive up to:

Childcare attendance pattern	Maximum contribution
Full day	Up to £60.00 per day
Half day	Up to £30.00 per half day

The 20+ Childcare Fund is awarded at the College's discretion and is not an entitlement. The College reserves the right to review and amend childcare funding at any time.

Where remote learning is taking place, the level of support may differ depending on the student's childcare need and timetable.

9.2 Childcare payments and evidence

Childcare funding payments will normally be made directly to the learner once their application has been approved. Payments will usually be made on a weekly basis.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that childcare fees are paid directly to the childcare provider. The College does not accept liability for childcare fees incurred by the student or for any failure by the student to pay the childcare provider.

Students must provide Student Services with copies of receipts or other appropriate evidence to confirm that childcare payments have been made, if requested.

A maximum 75% retainer may be paid during college holidays where this is necessary to retain the childcare place and where funding allows.

10. Higher Education Student Opportunity Fund

The Higher Education Student Opportunity Fund is available for individual Higher Education students, or groups of Higher Education students, to apply for grants to enhance their academic experience.

Grants are normally available between £100 and £1,000, subject to approval and available funding.

The fund provides students with an opportunity to collaborate with each other and with tutors to enhance their learning in new and innovative ways.

Awards will normally be made to individuals or groups of Higher Education students who have innovative projects designed to enhance their educational experience.

Examples of how grants may be used include:

- Participation in educational conference, seminars or excursions aligned to an academic discipline
- Collaborative student projects related to their students
- Additional academic events and invited guest speakers
- Attendance at seminars or events intended to enhance transferable skills
- Room hire and small equipment purchases to support special educational events and activities

Grants must not be used to subsidise programme fees, student accommodation fees, or the purchase of equipment not aligned to student or approved extracurricular learning activities.

Awards will be approved by the Head of Student Experience, Brand & Engagement in collaboration with the Centre Principal with responsibility for Higher Education.

12. Kits, Equipment and Digital Support

Kit, equipment and digital support is intended to ensure that eligible students can access the essential resources required to complete their study programme. It must not be used for lifestyle or non-educational purchases.

Support may include:

- Essential books
- Specialist equipment
- Tools
- Protective clothing
- Specialist clothing required for the course
- Laptops, tablets, internet access where these are essential to participation

Support will normally be provided where the item is required by the study programme and the student has an assessed financial need.

Where the college purchases equipment, such as a laptop or internet dongle, the student may be required to return the equipment if they leave their study programme early and no longer require the equipment, so that it can be reallocated to another student in need.

The college is not responsible for replacing or repairing damaged, faulty or stolen kit or equipment.

13. Payments, records and audit

The College will maintain auditable records for all financial support. Records must be sufficient to demonstrate eligibility, assessed need, evidence considered, award value, payment method, in-kind support provided, approvals and any exceptional decisions.

Record type	Examples
Application records	Application form, student declaration, date received and support requested.
Eligibility evidence	Income evidence, benefit award notices, Local Authority confirmation, residency evidence where needed.
Assessment records	Calculation of travel or meal support, rationale for award or refusal.
Award records	Value, type of support, start date, review date, payment or issue method.
Approval records	Manager approval for taxis, awards above standard limits, emergency meals or exceptional cases.
Audit trail	Receipts, BACS records, supplier orders, ID card credits, POS meal uptake reports and equipment records.

Evidence must be stored securely and retained in accordance with college data protection and record retention requirements. Access should be limited to staff who need the information to administer support.

14. Attendance, conduct, fraud and appeals

14.1 Attendance and engagement

Students receiving support are expected to attend, participate and engage positively with their programme.

Continued receipt of support may be reviewed where attendance, punctuality, behaviour, engagement with academic progress, or completion of required work is unsatisfactory.

Bursary payments may be based on attendance, satisfactory behaviour and engagement with academic progress and deadlines.

The College will consider individual circumstances before suspending or reducing support, particularly where withdrawal of support could worsen the barrier to attendance.

15.2 Conditions of support

By completing a financial support application, students sign a declaration confirming their agreement to the conditions of support.

SCC Group reserves the right to withdraw or suspend funding if the conditions of support are not met.

Where the College has purchased equipment for a student, the student may be required to return the equipment if they leave their programme early, complete their course, or no longer require the equipment.

15.3 False or misleading information

Where false, misleading or incomplete information is provided, the College reserves the right to withdraw support, recover funds, request the return of equipment and refer the matter to the relevant authorities where appropriate.

15.4 Appeals and reviews

Students can submit an appeal if their application for student financial support is declined.

The applicant will be asked to outline the reasons for disagreeing with the decision and why they believe the decision is unfair. Evidence must be submitted to support the claim and confirm that the request relates to educational participation costs.

A panel will be convened within 20 working days. The panel will normally consist of the Student Services Manager and the Head of Student Experience, Brand & Engagement.

The panel will review the decision, and the applicant will be notified of the panel's decision in writing within 5 working days.

Where a student is unhappy with how their application has been managed or with the support provided, they may also be directed to the Salford City College Group Complaints Procedure.

15.5 Annual review

This procedure will be reviewed annually, or sooner where funding guidance changes. The College will ensure that operational forms, student communications and system processes are updated to reflect the approved procedure.

Appendix A - Summary of retained support offer

Support offer	Criteria retained in this procedure
19+ Discretionary Bursary	Aged 19+ on 31 August 2026; household income normally below £30,000; enrolled on eligible programme; assessed financial need.
Advanced Learner Loan Bursary	Enrolled on a course funded by an Advanced Learner Loan; loan approval confirmed; assessed financial need.
Hardship Funding	General financial support for vulnerable and financially disadvantaged students to support participation.
20+ Childcare Funding	Aged 20+ on first day of learning; household income below £30,000; eligible programme; assessed childcare need.
Residential Access Funding	Available to eligible ESFA-funded loans learners where they need to live away from home to access learning.
Higher Education Student Opportunity Fund	Grants normally between £100 and £1,000 for eligible HE students or groups to enhance academic experience.
Kit and equipment	Essential books, equipment, tools or specialist clothing required for participation.
Digital support	Laptop, tablet or internet support where assessed as essential for study.
Attendance and engagement conditions	Continued support subject to attendance, punctuality, conduct, engagement and academic progress expectations.
Support offer	Criteria retained in this procedure

Appendix B - Operational evidence checklist

This checklist supports consistent decision-making and audit preparation. It does not replace professional judgement or the current Department for Education guidance, but it should be used by Student Services when checking whether the evidence held is sufficient to support an award.

Support type	Minimum evidence to retain	Decision record required
General 19+ application	Completed application form, student declaration and household income or benefit evidence.	Eligibility outcome assessed need, award type and value.
19+ Discretionary Bursary	Evidence of age, course enrolment, household income and financial hardship.	Household income band assessed need, weekly award and review date.
Advanced Learner Loan Bursary	Advanced Learner Loan approval letter, course eligibility and evidence of financial need.	Loan-funded course confirmed, household income band assessed need, weekly award and review date.
Hardship Funding	Evidence of income, hardship and specific participation cost.	Rationale for award, value, duration and payment or issue method.
20+ Childcare Funding	Evidence of age, household income, childcare provider, childcare costs, timetable and use of government-funded childcare where applicable.	Childcare need assessment, agreed funding level, payment method, receipts required and review date.
Residential Access Funding	Evidence of course eligibility, residential need, accommodation costs and funding eligibility.	Rationale for residential support, award value, duration and approval.
Higher Education Student Opportunity Fund	Application outlining project, educational benefit, costs and students involved.	Approval decision, grant value, conditions and evaluation requirements.
Kit, equipment and digital support	Evidence of income, curriculum need and item cost.	Item approved, issue date, ownership or return expectations and any serial number.
Appeals	Appeal statement and supporting evidence.	Panel membership, review outcome, decision date and written response.