

Financial assistance is available to those who meet the relevant criteria. This is intended to support those who need it during their time at college; you may be eligible for a bursary to help with costs like travel, meals, books, equipment, and other essential expenses. Support is targeted at students who need it most, including:

- those in or leaving care
- those living independently
- Those supporting a dependent
- those from low-income households
- those receiving certain benefits

Students approved for a college bursary will receive financial support to remove essential financial barriers to education, ensuring they can attend and complete their course. The Bursary Fund is intended to cover costs directly related to their study; you can apply for support with the following;

- Travel to and from college
- Meals during the day (if needed)
- Essential books, equipment or specialist clothing
- Compulsory trips and visits
- Work Placement costs
- Targeted support for students who would otherwise struggle to take part in learning

The bursary cannot be used for extracurricular activities or costs that are not essential to the students' programme of study. Including but not limited to leisure activities, optional trips, university applications, visits and auditions. These expenses are not directly linked to a student's ability to participate in or complete their current course, and as such cannot be funded through the bursary.

All Bursary Awards are subject to students meeting the terms of their Student Learning Agreement. Failure to comply will lead to suspension or removal of the bursary support. Students will need to reapply for bursary support each academic year. Awards are not automatically carried forward, and there is no guarantee of continued support.

The Vulnerable Group Bursary is available if:

- The student is in care or leaving care.
- The student is receiving Income Support OR Universal Credit because you are financially supporting yourself or financially supporting yourself and someone who is dependent on you, such as a child or partner.
- The student is getting Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Disability Living Allowance.

The Discretionary Bursary is available if:

- The student lives on their own and has a total annual gross income of no more than **£35,000**.
- The student lives with parents/guardians who have a total annual gross income of no more than **£35,000**.

Free Meals are available if:

- The student is under 19 and in receipt of, or parents who are in receipt of, one of the following
 - *Universal Credit*
 - *Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*
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If you think you are eligible, we encourage you to apply as early as possible via the [2026/27 Bursary Application Form](#) or using the QR code below.



Following application, please supply us with evidence from the options table below, you can either bring your printed evidence with you to your enrolment appointment or preferably email it to bursary@wilberforce.ac.uk in advance.

Unfortunately, applications cannot be processed without evidence; all applications will be on hold until this has been received. We aim to process applications received during enrolment no later than 9th September with support being in place from week commencing 14th September. You will be responsible for all college-related costs before this date.

Where possible, please ensure that applications are made and evidence provided no later than 18th December 2026. Applications after this date will be considered at the discretion of the College and will be subject to the availability of funds.

Vulnerable Group Bursary Provide one of the following	Discretionary Bursary Provide one of the following	Free Meals Provide one of the following
3 most recent full Universal Credit payment statements <i>UC evidence must confirm that the student is receiving UC in their own right and is financially supporting themselves (or themselves and a dependent)</i>	3 most recent full Universal Credit payment statements	3 most recent full Universal Credit payment statements
The most recent Income Support letter relating to 2025/26	Tax Credit Award Notice 2025/26	Letter confirming support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
The most recent Disability Living Allowance and ESA letters	Tax Return 2025/26	
A letter from the Local Authority or Support Worker confirming care arrangements	Job Centre Plus letter	
	P60 from both parents, if in employment	
	Other documents acceptable to the College showing proof of household income. These will be reviewed on an individual basis	

We may request additional evidence to ensure total gross household income can be accurately calculated. You will be contacted if this is necessary.

Frequently asked questions

What help will I get?
Vulnerable Bursary - Up to £1200 (pro rata) paid in weekly installments (Term time only). This amount depends on the application date. If you apply at the start of the year, £1200 will be split into weekly payments over approx. 34 weeks. If you apply later, you will receive a reduced amount. Awards are based on an assessment of actual financial need, and while students may receive up to £1,200 per year, they will only be allocated the amount necessary to support participation. Discretionary Bursary - Depending on your circumstances, help may be given for a travel pass, meals (if not eligible for government funded free meals), mandatory course costs and help with work placement costs. In most cases, regular monetary payments will not be made. Free Meals - This is in addition to the Bursaries listed above. Students under 19 being in receipt of, or parents who are in receipt of, one of the benefits previously listed will be provided with a daily meal allowance to be used in the college canteen in exchange for a selection of meal deals. The value will be preloaded onto your student ID card.
How do I get evidence from my Universal Credit Account?
Log into your U/C account – go to payments- click on the date- statement will open- top right shows 'print this statement'. This will allow you to download or attach the statement to an email, repeat for 3 months statements. Please send to bursary@wilberforce.ac.uk with the student's name and S number in the subject line
Who can apply?
All students can apply - Applications must be made by the student, and a new application is needed every year. Parents can supply the supporting evidence, but the application MUST be made by the student.
Is there a deadline?
You should aim to apply no later than 1st September to ensure support is in place as quickly as possible. We aim to process initial applications by 9th September. You can apply after this date however; we cannot guarantee your application will be approved or what level of support may be available. Where possible please ensure that your application is made and evidence provided, no later than Friday 18th December 2026
How will I be paid or receive help?
Meal values will be preloaded onto your student ID card to be exchanged for a selection of meal deals in the college canteen. Mobile Student Rider tickets will be issued to those using the Stagecoach buses. Students travelling on the W1/W2 buses will have their student ID card stamped to allow free travel. Vulnerable Group Bursary payments will be paid weekly into student bank accounts. All accounts MUST be in the name of the student.
Once I have applied, is the Vulnerable Group Bursary or Discretionary Bursary automatic?
No. All Bursary payments, bus passes and meals are subject to your attendance, behavior, work and meeting college expectations, and this will be assessed weekly. Bursary funds are not guaranteed. If there is a high demand for the Discretionary funds, assistance may be reduced or withdrawn.
What if I need extra financial help?
You do not have to be on a bursary to request extra financial help. If you are experiencing exceptional financial hardship, you can apply for additional assistance via the Hardship Fund. The circumstances, eligibility, and evidence will be assessed on an individual basis by the college. There will be a limit to the amount of support available and the number of applications that can be made by individual students. For further details please contact bursary@wilberforce.ac.uk