

**16-18 EHCP & 19+**

**Continuing Students**

**Bursary Guidance**





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## Pre-requisites

- Students must be enrolled at West Thames College and receive an ID card
- Student must have a bank account in their name
- Students must have login details to access the application portal

### Username:

Student ID number (as shown on your ID card) followed by @student.west-thames.ac.uk

#### Example

299999@student.west-thames.ac.uk

### Password:

#### New students

WestDDMMYYYY (Date of Birth) or if you changed your password in College when you logged on to the computer, please use your new password.

#### Continuing students

Same as your computer login password



## Application Form - Online Only

The online application is for both bursary and free college meals. Only one application is required.

Application  
Portal



<https://westthames.paymystudent.com/portal>

### Steps to apply:

1. Login to PayMyStudent using your college Microsoft account (college email address and password)
2. Answer all the questions in your application correctly.
3. Attach all required documents to your application. Incomplete applications will not be assessed.
4. Documents must be in .pdf format or clear pictures of paper statements. Screenshots will be rejected.



## Guide to the evidence requested:

### Identification Documents: (one of the below)

- Passport or Birth Certificate (UK Only)
- Home Office ID Card (BRP)
- E-Visa
- Settlement Documents

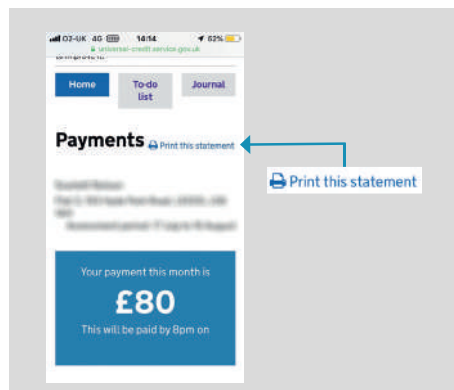
### Family income or benefit documents: (as applicable)

- Universal Credits - the last 3 months bank statements (All pages in .pdf format)
- Bank statements - the last 3 months bank statements showing Universal Credit payments
- Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, ESA or Pension Credits Letter from DWP dated 2025 and the last 3 months bank statements showing benefit income
- For other income sources, contact student welfare

- If you are self-employed, please submit a Self-employment declaration, this document is available on request or Tax Return Form

### Bank Statements:

- Must show incoming benefits (All pages in .pdf format)
- This must be the parents bank statements, where the parent is receiving the income support
- If 19+, please submit your bank statement



### Vulnerable Bursary (LAC)

#### Eligibility Criteria

- Age 16-19+ on the 31st August 2025 and defined vulnerable
- Participating in a study program lasting 30 weeks or more (pro-rata amount for less than 30 weeks)

#### Defined Vulnerable Groups

- In care with the local authority
- Leaving care (looked after by social services)
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credits and living independently (without parents).
- Receiving Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) with Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit.
- Social workers must email a LAC form and supporting letters directly to [studentwelfare@west-thames.ac.uk](mailto:studentwelfare@west-thames.ac.uk)  
If LAC is not confirmed the student will not receive their bursary or free college meals.
- Awards will be allocated either from the start date of learning (as noted on the learning agreement) or from the date a completed application with evidence is received, whichever is later
- Pro-rata awards will be made for students who begin 6 weeks or more after the course start date

**Note:** A privately fostered child is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

### Discretionary Bursary

#### Eligibility Criteria

- Meet the residency criteria
- 16-18 on 31st August 2025
- Aged 19 and who are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or students aged 19 or over who have an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan
- Receiving benefits
- Family income of not more than £30,000

**Note:** Young parents under 20, please apply for the bursary to access Care to Learn support.

#### Care to Learn

If you have a child at West Thames College Nursery, please complete an online application for financial support.

**Note:** We will issue a yellow form, which needs to be submitted to the nursery.



## Free College Meals (FCM)

### Eligibility Criteria

- Aged 16, 17 or 18 on the 31st August 2025
- Aged 19 and continuing the study programme you began aged 16-18
- Aged 19-23 and has got an EHCP (Education Health Plan)



## Free School Meals (FSM)

### Eligibility Criteria

- Aged 14+ under 16 (Threshold students)

### Eligibility benefits to receive with either FCM or FSM

- Income Support/Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (annual gross income of no more than £16,190 and not entitled to Working Tax Credit)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after stopping qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (annual household income less than £7,400 after tax and excluding benefits)

Applications for Meals are open all year and there is no closing date. FCMs are not for adults other than those specified above. Students must bring a packed lunch until their application is processed and approved. Social workers must submit a LAC form.

#### Note:

**The following groups of students are not eligible for free meals in FE:**

Students aged 19 or over at the start of their study programme unless they have an EHC plan or are a 19+ continuer apprentices, including those with an EHC plan.





## How to open a bank account

All students must submit bank details to receive their bursary - please do not apply until you have opened a bank account.

### Required Documents

- A letter confirming enrolment at the college (available from reception stamped and signed)

- ARC card or BRP card to prove your identity. (or Home Office letters) or E-visa
- Local authority letter if the student is in care

### Recommended banks to approach

- HSBC/Halifax Online/Monzo Online/Lloyds bank



## What are the bursary funds for?

The bursary covers essential education-related costs

- Essential uniforms and equipment
- Meals and necessary course-related expenses
- Travel (more than 3 mile radius)
- Kit (contribution)
- Trips
- Stationery
- Exam fees

The bursary payment is subject to attendance and punctuality.

Attendance should normally be at a minimum of 90%. Extenuating circumstances that are affecting attendance will, however, be considered.

### Adult bursary doesn't include

- Gym
- DBS
- No free college meals unless you are 19+, continuing or EHCP

### Note:

Applications can take up to 28 working days.

Applications will be closed if the evidence requested is not received after 28 days.

**Please refer to the bursary policy for further information.**







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## Check List

### **Enrolment & ID Received -**

You are officially enrolled and have received your student ID number.

### **Portal Access -**

You have logged into the PayMyStudent (PMS) bursary application portal.

### **Document Upload -**

You have uploaded all required documents (e.g., proof of income, bank details, etc.).

### **Declaration Signed -**

You signed the declaration by typing your name and submitting your application.

### **Ongoing Communication -**

You are regularly checking the PMS portal for messages or updates, which appear at the bottom of the portal page.

**Bursary Office:** Room A006

**Email:** [studentwelfare@west-thames.ac.uk](mailto:studentwelfare@west-thames.ac.uk)

**Opening hours:** Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10am - 3pm

**Closed for administration:** Tuesday and Friday

**Closed for lunch between:** 12pm - 1pm