

Financial Support or Free Meals 2023/24



What you will need to apply for bursary

1. Complete West Thames College enrolment
2. Student ID number and Password for the computers, same login is used for the application portal (PayMyStudent)
3. Immigration Documents which is applicable to your application: Your Passport, Home Office ID Card, Birth Certificate (UK Only) or Settlement Documents.
4. Any of the following documents, to prove family income or benefit documents:
 - ✓ Universal Credits – 2 statements **ALL** Pages in .pdf format and
 - ✓ Bank statements – 2 statements showing Universal Credits payment
 - ✓ Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, ESA or Pension Credits – The letter from DWP dated 2023 and 3 most recent bank statements showing benefit income.
 - ✓ If your family income is from sources not mentioned above, you can drop in to bursary office to speak to a member of staff.

How to complete bursary application

You must have all the documents scanned or on your phone ready to upload to complete your online application.

1. Visit: <https://westthames.paymystudent.com/portal/> or QR Code.
2. Login using college email address and the password you use to login to college computers.
3. Answer all questions correctly – If you or your family are in receipt of Universal Credits, you must tick this option.
4. Upload All your relevant documents as request in the portal i.e. Passport, Benefit letters, bank statement.
5. Documents must be in .pdf format or clear pictures of paper statements - All pages must be uploaded.



Financial support types

Students under 16-18 on the 31 August 2023

Vulnerable Bursary

- In care or leaving care (looked after by social services) *or*
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credits and **living independently (without parents)** *or*
- On Employment & Support Allowance with Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments. (PIP)
- LAC forms and supporting letter from social workers must be e-mailed directly to studentwelfare@west-thames.ac.uk

Discretionary Bursary

For students who are aged 16-18 on 31 August 2023 or aged 19 continuing the same course and either:

- You or your parents/guardians are in receipt of benefits* *or*
- Have a family income of not more than £25,000.

** If on Universal Credit, your family income including UC must be less than £25,000.*

Students over 19 on the 31 August 2023

Discretionary Learner Support (DLS)

To be eligible for DLS, **all** of the following must apply:

- You are aged 19-23 on an FE course up to and including Level3, or aged 24+ on an FE course up to and including Level 2, *and*
- You are in receipt of benefits, *and*
- You have a family income of not more than £28,000.

Loan Bursary

To be eligible, you must be aged 19+ and:

- Be studying on a course at Level 3 or higher, *and*
- Be in receipt of the Advanced Learner Loan or have had your Loan approved by the Student Loans Company, *and*
- Be in receipt of benefits*, *and* have a family income of not more than £35,000.
- ** If on Universal Credit, your family income including UC must be less than £35,000.*

Free meals at college

1. Aged **15,16,17** or **18** on the 31st August 2023
2. Aged **19** and continuing the study programme you began aged 16-18
3. Aged **19-23** and has got an EHCP (Education Health Plan)

Applications for Free Meals are open all year and there is no closing date. FCM are not for adults other than those specified above.

Eligible benefits - Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students which is defined as students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- o Income Support
- o Universal Credit with less than £7400 earned income
- o Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- o Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- o Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- o The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- o Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

If you do not receive any of the above benefit, you may still be eligible if you are able to provide proof that your family income is less than £16,190pa

[Need more information?](#)

Please see the college website or Moodle for more information. This booklet is only a guide. If you have further questions, please speak to your student learning adviser, the Welfare and Support Advisor, or any member of the Student Experience Team.

[Ruann Rajakaruna](#)

studentwelfare@west-thames.ac.uk

Welfare and Support Adviser

Room A006 (Student Common Room)

Office hours: Mon – Wed - Thurs, 9.30am to 4pm closed for lunch (12 - 1pm)