



BURSARY APPLICATION BOOKLET 2024/25

Bursary Office Room A006
studentwelfare@west-thames.ac.uk

Office Opening Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10 am to 3 pm
Office Closed for administration: Tuesday and Friday
Closed for lunch between 12 pm – 1 pm

1. Pre-requisites

- Students must be fully enrolled at West Thames College and receive an ID card.
- Minimum 2 weeks of attendance before applying for bursary.
- 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 (e.g.299999@student.west-thames.ac.uk).
Example (299999@student.west-thames.ac.uk)
- **Password:** WestDDMMYYYY (Date of Birth)

2. Application Form – Online Only

- The online application is for both bursary and Free College meals. Only one application is required.

Link for the Application Portal

<https://westthames.paymystudent.com/portal/> and QR Code



Video to help you apply



Steps to apply:

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

Guide to the evidence requested:

- **Identification Documents:**
 - ✓ Passport or Birth Certificate (UK Only)
 - ✓ Home Office ID Card (BRP)
 - ✓ Settlement Documents
- **Family income or benefit documents:**
 - ✓ Universal Credits – 3 statements (**ALL** Pages in .pdf format)
 - ✓ Bank statements – 3 statements showing Universal Credits payment.
 - ✓ Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, ESA or Pension Credits Letter from DWP dated 2024 and
 - ✓ 3 most recent 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.
- **Bank statements:**
 - ✓ Must show incoming benefits (**ALL** Pages in .pdf format)
 - ✓ This must be parents' bank statements where the parent is receiving the income support.
 - ✓ If 19+, please submit your own bank statement unless requested otherwise

3. Bursary Types

Vulnerable Bursary (LAC)

- Eligibility Criteria:
 - ✓ Age 16-19+ on the 31st August 2024 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

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

- ◆ Social workers must email a LAC form and supporting letters directly to 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.

Discretionary Bursary

- Eligibility Criteria:
 - ✓ Meet the residency criteria.
 - ✓ Aged 16-18 on 31 August 2024, or 19+ EHCP students or aged 19 continuing the same course.
 - ✓ Family income, including Universal Credit, must be less than £25,000.

Students, parents, or guardians must ensure that student applications are complete with all required documents. If there are any issues or additional evidence needed, we will notify students via their college email.

Young parents

The Care to Learn scheme helps with childcare costs for parents under 20 at the start of their course.

caretolearn@studentbursary.education.gov.uk

Telephone: 0800 121 8989

Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) Bursary

- Eligibility criteria
 - ✓ Meet the residency criteria
 - ✓ Aged 19-23 on an FE course up to and including Level 3, or aged 24+ on an FE course up to and including Level 2, *and*
 - ✓ Receiving benefits, *and*
 - ✓ Family income of not more than £35,000

If you have a child at West Thames College Nursery please make an online application once you have secured a place at the nursery.

Note: Young parents under 20, please refer to Care to Learn

Loan Bursary –

- Eligibility criteria
 - ✓ You must be aged 19+ studying on a course at Level 3 or higher, *and*
 - ✓ Meet the residency criteria
 - ✓ Receiving an Advanced Learner Loan approved by the Student Loans Company
 - ✓ Receiving benefits and family income, including Universal Credit, must be less than £35,000.



- ◆ *Higher Education Loan students cannot apply for a*
- ◆ *Adults are not eligible for Free college meals*
- ◆ *JCP students are not eligible to apply for bursary*
- ◆ *No Cash payments*

4. Free College Meals (FCM)

- Eligibility criteria
 - ✓ Aged **16,17** or **18** on the 31st August 2024
 - ✓ Aged **19** and continuing the study programme you began aged 16-18
 - ✓ Aged **19-23** and has got an EHCP (Education Health Plan)

5. Free School Meals (FSM)

- Eligibility criteria
 - ✓ Aged **14+ under 16 (Threshold students)**
- Eligible 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).
 - ✓ 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 lack form.

6. How to open a bank account

All Students will be required to submit bank details to receive their bursary – please do not apply until you have opened a bank account.

Required Document:

- ✓ 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)
- ✓ Local authority letter if the student is in care

Recommended banks to approach

- ✓ HSBC / Halifax Online / Monzo Online / Lloyds bank

7. What are the bursary funds for?

The bursary covers essential education-related costs such as:

- ✓ Travel (for those living 2 miles or more from the campus).
- ✓ Books.
- ✓ Essential uniforms and equipment.
- ✓ Meals and necessary course-related expenses.
- ✓ Childcare costs related to timetabled hours. Free early education hours must be used first if the child is eligible.

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.

Applications can take up to 28 working. Applications will be closed if the evidence requested is not received after 28 days.

Please refer to the bursary policy for further information.