



Policy: Bursaries for Further Education

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Service: Support Services

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1. COURSES COVERED BY THE BURSARIES SCHEME

- 1.1 West Lothian Council assists students attending full-time courses, up to but not including Higher National Certificate level, in England or Wales and funded by the Learning & Skills Council, in vocational areas not provided for by any Scottish College of Further Education.
- 1.2 A further education bursary is a discretionary grant made by the Education Authority to help maintain a person in education beyond the statutory school leaving age. The conditions under which an award is made and assessed are subject to the Education Authority Bursaries (Scotland) Regulations 1995 and the currently approved policy of the Education Authority.
- 1.3 The Scottish Colleges administer bursaries for their students attending courses up to Higher National Certificate level and an application for assistance should be made directly to the college attended.
- 1.4 No support is available for courses at private establishments.
- 1.5 A full-time course is one which involves an attendance of more than 21 hours per week over a minimum of 10 consecutive term weeks, excluding integrated courses of industrial training and block release courses. Sandwich courses are normally treated as full-time courses only for those periods actually spent at the educational establishment.

2. CATEGORIES OF AWARD

- 2.1 Category A further education bursaries (FEB) are awarded to students attending college who have not reached the age of 18 on 1 September.
- 2.2 Category B further education bursaries (FEB) are awarded to students 18 years or over on 1 September attending a college.

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Residence

In order to satisfy the Education Authority Bursaries (Scotland) Regulations, an applicant must satisfy one of the following requirements:

- 3.1.1 Be ordinarily resident in West Lothian, other than for the purpose of attending a course, on the qualifying day, which is, for a course commencing:-

1 August - 31 December, the preceding 30 June
1 January - 31 March, the preceding 31 October
1 April - 31 July, last day of the preceding February

and meet one of the following criteria:

- (a) Have been resident in the British Isles, other than for full-time education, throughout the period of three years preceding the relevant date, which is, for a course commencing:

in the Autumn term, 31 August
in the Spring term, 31 December
in the Summer term, 31 March; or

- (b) Satisfy the Authority that she/he was born and spent most of his/her life in the British Isles and has been ordinarily resident in the British Isles for at least one year in the three years above at (a): or
 - (c) Satisfy the Authority that she/he is not an independent student but was born and has spent most of his/her life in the British Isles and has had at least one parent ordinarily resident in the British Isles for the three years as above at (a).
- 3.1.2 (a) Be a national of a member state of the European Economic Area (EEA) ordinarily resident throughout the three years preceding the relevant date in the EEA who has successfully sought work upon arrival in the British Isles (i.e. a migrant worker). He/she need not be resident in West Lothian on the qualifying date but, equally, must not have been resident in any other area in Scotland. The proposed course of study must lead to a recognised vocational qualification and must normally be related to previous employment in the British Isles:
- or
- (b) Be the child of (a) above who can establish that his residence is a consequence of his/her parents' employment in the British Isles.
- 3.1.3 Be a refugee, his/her spouse or child, provided that she/he has been resident in the British Isles since the grant of Refugee Status.
- 3.1.4 Be a National of a member of the European Economic Area ordinarily resident throughout the three years preceding the relevant date in the EEA who seeks a course of study at an educational establishment in West Lothian. Usual requirements of Council policy apply, i.e. course recognition, etc. The bursary will consist of approved tuition fees only.
- Note:*
 EC Countries are: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
 EEA Countries are: EC Countries plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.
- 3.1.5 Students meeting the residence requirements at the time of the initial application continue to receive bursary support from the Authority to the normal completion of their approved course of study.

3.2 Entitlement

- 3.2.1 Students aged under 18 (at 1 September) are normally entitled to a higher school allowance or category A further education bursary for up to two years.
- 3.2.2 Beyond the age of 18 (at 1 September), students are normally entitled to a single category B further education bursary to support them in gaining a vocational qualification.
- 3.2.3 The total period of support cannot normally exceed the award of a higher school allowance or category A further education bursary for two years and a category B further education bursary for a single course or programme.
- 3.2.4 It is anticipated that a vocational qualification will normally be gained in one year of full-time study, given the opportunities which exist for part-time and open-learning study to introduce and reinforce a single period of full-time study.

3.3 Previous Awards

- 3.3.1 Applications for a second award from persons who have previously received education authority discretionary awards or SOEID grant for more than one year but have not successfully completed the course will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.3.2 Awards will not be granted to enable persons to add to or improve an existing advanced level qualification whether or not they have had assistance from an education authority or the SOEID for their first course.
- 3.3.3 Awards for second or subsequent years of study in a multi-year programme will only be made where the student has made satisfactory progress in the previous year.

4. HOW TO APPLY FOR A BURSARY

- 4.1 Application forms for further education bursaries are available from colleges of further education in Scotland (for the courses they run) or from Education & Cultural Services, Lindsay House, South Bridge Street, Bathgate, EH48 1TS (email: CustomerCareUnit@westlothian.gov.uk). A college unconditional "Offer of Place" letter, applicants' birth certificate and any other documentary evidence supporting the application must be enclosed.
- 4.2 The closing dates for further education bursaries are -
- 30 September - for courses that commence between July and November.
31 January - for courses that commence after November and for students whose 16th birthday is between 1 October and 28 February.
- 4.3 Late applications will not be accepted.

5. THE AWARD

5.1 Course Costs

The bursary may include sums to cover the costs of -

- (a) approved tuition and examination fees;
- (b) maintenance allowances;
- (c) allowances toward the costs of necessary books, instruments, tools, special clothing, etc.,; and
- (d) necessary and reasonable travelling expenses.

5.2 Fees

- 5.2.1 Approved tuition and examination fees are paid by the Authority *irrespective* of the level of the student's income or the income of the student's parents or spouse. However, no fee is normally due in respect of any student under 18 years of age at 1 September attending a full-time course or programme at a college of further education. Such students generally attend free of charge.
- 5.2.2 Fees for students at colleges of further education will be paid at no more than the rate deemed appropriate by Scottish Ministers. Fees for private establishments may exceed the amount which the authority is prepared to pay. Students are responsible to the college or establishment for any amount by which a fee exceeds the fee awarded.

- 5.2.3 “Fees Only” awards may be made to eligible students who do not wish to claim maintenance and other allowances.
- 5.2.4 Fees cannot be paid for students who do not meet the criteria for eligibility for a bursary.

5.3 Maintenance Allowances

- 5.3.1 Allowances are variable according to whether the student remains at home or must leave home to study and are intended to go towards board and lodgings; pocket money; clothing; laundry and dry cleaning; and the short vacations. Maintenance allowances are not intended to provide for the maintenance of the student during the summer vacation and are payable for the duration of the course only.

5.3.2 Basic Rates

	<i>Standard (at home) Allowance</i>	<i>Higher (away from home) Allowance</i>
(a) Category A		
(b) (under 18 at 1 September)	EMA entitlement	£53.95*
(c) Category B		
(d) 18 and over at 1 September	£56.00	£77.20 (inc. personal allowance of £17.65)

*reduced by the amount of any Education Maintenance Allowance to which the student is entitled.

5.3.3 Standard Maintenance Allowance

The standard maintenance allowance is granted to students living in the parental home (or the home of a guardian, grandparent or other relative), and to students who require to live away from home as a result of decisions not to use locally available courses.

5.3.4 Higher Maintenance Allowance

- (a) Students will be assumed to live in the parental home if this is within reasonable daily travelling distance of the college they are attending, unless the Authority is satisfied that their studies would be adversely affected if they lived in the parental home.
- (b) The higher allowance is granted to all married students living in the matrimonial home.
- (c) A married student living within the student’s parental home is eligible only for the standard allowance, and where two students attending full-time courses are married to each other and live in either of the parental homes, both are eligible only for the standard allowance.
- (d) The higher allowance is granted to all widowed, divorced and separated students living outwith the parental home.
- (e) Where the student resides in a college hostel or residence the allowance will normally be the actual charge for such residence **plus the personal allowance of £17.65 per week**. The personal allowance is granted for the duration of the course. However, hostel charges may exceed the amount which the Authority is prepared to pay. Students are responsible for any amount by which a charge exceeds the award.

- (f) The higher maintenance allowance may be paid to a student living in the parental home where the Authority is satisfied that the student would otherwise suffer undue hardship because of the low level of income of the person in that parental home.

5.4 Dependants' Allowances

5.4.1 The following weekly allowances are payable for dependants for the duration of the course -

(a) dependent spouse, partner, or other adult dependant or first dependent child if there is no adult dependant (e.g. where the student is a widow or widower with no means of supporting the child£44.75

(b) each dependent child up to 18 years of age£10.50

5.4.2 A student cannot claim a dependant's allowance for more than one adult.

5.4.3 An award holder is not eligible for a dependant's allowance in respect of another full-time student who is eligible for an award from public funds (except where this is a higher school allowance).

5.4.4 The above allowances are liable to reduction according to the unearned income of the dependants from all sources except child benefit. Any income of the spouse or partner is reckonable as income that is available for the upkeep of other dependants and is taken into account in the assessment of allowances for those dependants. Total income is set against total allowances on a pound for pound basis.

5.4.5 Where a student who is eligible for a dependant's allowance, has an established home outwith reasonable daily travelling distance of the college attending and is required to live in a college hostel or residence or lodgings and maintain that established home elsewhere for the dependant, an additional "two homes" allowance of £16.00 per week will be paid for the duration of the course.

5.4.6 All students may claim dependants' allowances whether or not they are exempt from a parental contribution

5.5 Travelling Expenses

Travelling expenses are taken into account when further education bursaries are being assessed. Travel costs are awarded **irrespective of parental income** to students under 18 years of age on 1 September. Parental income details are not, therefore, required where a student under 18 only seeks payment of travel costs (plus any approved tuition fees) and completion of the application form for approved fees and travel only will automatically lead to the award of travel expenses.

5.6 Allowances For Study Expenses

Colleges are consulted on essential costs before an award is made and an allowance is given towards the costs of books, tools, materials and clothing. This allowance is contained within the first bursary installment.

5.7 Allowances For Students With Special Educational Needs

Special consideration is given to any disabled students who, by reason of their disability, are obliged to incur additional expenditure arising from their attendance at college.

5.8 Students In Receipt Of Dss Benefits

- 5.8.1 Students who have a right to claim DSS benefits and are NOT required to register as being available for work while attending a full-time course of study may submit an application for bursary support to cover the costs of tuition and examination fees, essential books, equipment and travel costs. Entitlement to Income Support will be retained and eligibility for Housing Benefit, free school meals, footwear and clothing grants and exemption from NHS prescription charges will be safeguarded.
- 5.8.2 This regulation will mainly concern students who are disabled or single parents.

6. THE CONTRIBUTION

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 In calculating the amount of a bursary, the Education Authority can take into account the student's family income position. Assessment of the contribution can be made against the gross aggregated income of parents, spouse or partner and student. The Authority's definition of parent includes step-parent and adoptive parent as well as natural parent. If an application is received without details of parental income, and the applicant does not meet the criteria for self-supporting student status (see para. 6.5), the award will consist of approved fees only.
- 6.1.2 Contribution scales shown refer to full session awards. Where an award is made for less than thirty weeks contributions are reduced proportionally.
- 6.1.3 When brothers and sisters hold the same kind of bursary, only one contribution is assessed and divided among the students and deducted from the individual awards.

6.2 The Student's/Pupil's Contribution

- 6.2.1 A student's/pupil's contribution is assessed on the personal income which an award holder receives during the academic year for which a bursary application has been made.
- 6.2.2 The award is reduced on a pound for pound basis for unearned income received in excess of £3,500.
- 6.2.3 The award is reduced on a pound for pound basis for earned income in excess of £3,500 from work done during term time or vacation periods.
- 6.2.4 Supplementary grants received for an educational purpose from an award-making body are not taken into account.

6.3 The Parental Contribution

- 6.3.1 The assessed award is reduced by the amount of the contribution which the parents are considered to be able to make towards the student's or pupil's expenses. The authority's definition of parent includes step-parent and adoptive parent as well as natural parent.
- 6.3.2 In the assessment of the parental contribution, the income taken as the starting point is the **gross aggregated** income of the parents of the holder. Gross earned income details should be submitted on the Authority's Forms WL1 which accompany each application form. Employers' Forms P60 are not normally acceptable unless they clearly show the level of non-taxable superannuation contributions. Where parents have been divorced or are living apart the Authority takes into consideration the whole circumstances.

6.3.3 The gross income used in the assessment is normally that for the previous income tax or financial year. Where income for the income tax or financial year in which the academic year begins is likely to be at least 15% less than that for the previous income tax or financial year, application may be made to have the award assessed provisionally on the basis of estimated income for the current income tax or financial year. It is not intended that this concession should be granted where parental gross income, by the nature of employment or investment etc, is subject to fluctuations from year to year.

6.3.4 Non-taxable DSS benefits are excluded from any calculation in respect of the parental contribution. Taxable benefits, e.g. Widowed Mother's Allowance, Widow's Pension, State Retirement Pension, Unemployment Benefit and other taxable benefits, are included in the calculation.

6.3.5 Exemption from a Parental Contribution

A parental contribution is assessed on all bursaries except where an applicant meets the criteria for self-supporting student status (see paragraph 6.5).

6.3.6 Contribution Scale 1 - FEB Category A - under 18 on 1 September

This contribution scale is applied to FEB Category A bursaries (not to Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)).

If parental gross income is £13,200 a contribution of £5 is assumed. The contribution increases at the rate of £2 per £5 balance of income thereafter. The following table illustrates the effect of this contribution scale:-

<i>Balance of Income</i>	<i>Contribution</i>	<i>Award (away from home)</i>
£13,195	Nil	£2,158
£13,200	£ 5	£2,153
£14,000	£ 320	£1,838
£15,000	£ 720	£1,438
£17,000	£1,520	£ 638
£18,595	£2,158	NIL

After the contribution has been assessed, it is reduced by £192 in respect of each child (other than an award holder) dependent on the parent(s).

6.3.7 Contribution Scale 2 - FEB Category B - 18 and Over on 1 September

This contribution scale is applied to FEB Category B Awards.

If the gross income is £21,271 a contribution of £40 is assumed. The contribution increases at the rate of £1 per £5 thereafter. The following table illustrates the effect of this contribution scale:-

<i>Balance of Income</i>	<i>Contribution</i>
£21,270	Nil
£21,271	£ 40
£23,000	£ 386
£26,000	£ 986
£30,000	£1,786
£35,000	£2,786

After the contribution has been assessed it is reduced by £192 in respect of each child (other than an award holder) dependent on the parent(s).

6.4 Contribution Scale 3 - The Spouse's or Partner's Contribution

This Scale is applied in the case of Category B awards to students with spouses or partners and who are exempt from parental contribution.

If the gross income of the spouse or partner is £13,001 a contribution of £10 is assumed. The contribution increases at the rate of £1 in £5 thereafter. The following table illustrates the effect of this spouse contribution scale:-

<i>Balance of Income</i>	<i>Contribution</i>
£13,000	Nil
£13,001	£ 10
£14,000	£ 210
£16,000	£ 610
£20,000	£1,410
£25,000	£2,410

After the contribution has been assessed it is reduced by £192 in respect of each child (other than an award holder) dependent on the spouse.

6.5 The Self-Supporting Student

6.5.1 A self-supporting student must have -

- (a) no parent living; or
- (b) attained the age of 21 on the commencement date of the course for which the award is made; or
- (c) been married for at least two years prior to that date; or
- (d) supported himself or herself out of earnings from full-time employment for any three years preceding that date. In deciding whether a student has supported himself or herself the Authority will take into account both the nature of full-time employment and the level of earnings.

6.5.2 The following periods may be counted as part of the three year period of self-support:-

- (a) any period during which the student had the care of a dependant who was under 18 years of age or was in receipt of sickness, invalidity or maternity benefits;
- (b) periods during which the student was in receipt of unemployment benefit or income support. The three year period may also include training under Youth Training (YT) or Employment Training (ET)/Training for Work Schemes.

6.5.3 If the application for self-supporting student status is based to any extent on periods of employment/unemployment it must be accompanied by documentary evidence for the periods concerned in the form of wage or salary slips, Tax Office letter or Forms P60.

7. CONDITIONS OF AWARD

7.1 General

- 7.1.1 All bursaries are subject to the satisfactory conduct, progress and attendance of the holder during the course for which the bursary was awarded. In cases where conduct or progress or attendance is, in the opinion of the Authority, unsatisfactory without any satisfactory explanation, the Authority will cancel any future payments due. The student may be required to refund any part of the award and any sums the Authority has paid direct to the college, e.g. tuition fees (see para 7.2 and 11).
- 7.1.2 Full attendance at all timetabled classes is expected unless acceptable reasons for absence, e.g. certificate illness, are available. If, because of illness or other reasons, the holder is absent from the course, he/she must comply with college regulations regarding medical certificates, etc and if the absence is two weeks or more, must inform Education Services (Bursaries) in writing (see para 7.2).
- 7.1.3 The holder or anyone acting on his or her behalf must provide the Education Authority with the information needed to pay the correct amount.
- 7.1.4 The holder must not accept any other bursary without the consent of the Education Authority.
- 7.1.5 The Education Authority must be informed of any change in income or other information used to pay the correct amount.
- 7.1.6 Where the Education Authority are satisfied that there has been an overpayment of bursary for any reason and request repayment, the holder of the bursary must repay the Education Authority.
- 7.1.7 THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY MAY REVISE THE BURSARY AND MAY SUSPEND OR TERMINATE PAYMENT WITHOUT FURTHER WARNING IF THE CONDITIONS OF AWARD ARE NOT MET OR IF THE AUTHORITY ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE CONDUCT OR PROGRESS OF THE HOLDER. THE HOLDER MAY THEN BE REQUIRED TO RE-PAY THE WHOLE OR SOME OF THE AWARD (INCLUDING FEES).

7.2 Repayments

- 7.2.1 The Authority will require a refund of all or part of any sums already paid and/or cancel the award where attendance is unsatisfactory unless there is a reason for absence acceptable to the Corporate Manager, Education Services. If an award holder is absent or expects to be absent for more than two weeks e.g. for medical reasons, he/she must advise Education Support Services (Bursaries) **immediately** in writing. The bursary may then be suspended and conserved until studies are resumed.
- Alternative sources of support may be available in the form of Income Support or contributory benefits such as Sickness Benefit.
- 7.2.2 When a student leaves a course of study, the Authority will require repayment of all allowances unless satisfactory attendance for a minimum of 13 term-time weeks has been recorded.

7.3 Period of Award

The award will be for one year only or less if the period of the course is less than a year. A new application must be submitted for each year of a multi-year programme.

8. PAYMENT OF AWARDS

8.1 Further Education Bursaries

An award will normally be paid in monthly instalments as listed in the offer of award letter and continuation of the payment of instalments will depend upon satisfactory college reports on attendance and progress. The first instalment cheque will be sent to the college for collection by the student. Subsequent cheques will be posted direct to the student.

8.2 Fees

Approved tuition fees are paid by the Authority direct to the college (see Section 5.2 Fees).

9. PROVISIONAL AWARDS

9.1 General

All applicants or their parents must supply documentary proof of their income whenever they are required to do so. If documents are not available at the time of application, a provisional award may be made. Provisional awards may be made whenever the Authority has been unable to obtain details upon which a final assessment can be made. Acceptance of a provisional award must only be on the clear understanding that the award remains to be finalised and that failure to provide the Authority with the information or documentation required to enable the award to be finalised, will result in termination of the award and the recovery of sums paid

9.2 Self-Employed Parents

The awards to many students whose parents are self-employed cannot be finally assessed until well after the beginning of the session because their taxable income has not yet been agreed by the Inland Revenue. In these cases, provisional awards are made on the basis of estimated parental income. If, when parental income is subsequently verified, overpayments are found to have been made, recovery shall be sought by the Authority by deduction from future instalments of grant or by an invoice for the appropriate amount. In some cases, however, agreed income figures are not available in time for a final assessment to be made before the start of the following session. In these circumstances no maintenance shall be paid for a further session until the award for the previous year has been finally assessed.

10. OVERPAYMENTS

The Education Authority Bursaries (Scotland) Regulations 1988 as amended empower authorities to recover from students any overpayments made by the Authority. Where the Education Authority is satisfied that there has been an overpayment of bursary for any reason and request repayment, the holder of the bursary shall be obliged to pay to the Education Authority the amount requested. This means that when students are overpaid, whether because of failure to report changes in circumstances or because of withdrawal from their courses or for any other reason, the Authority has a right and a duty to seek recovery and will normally do so (see para. 7.2 and 11).

11. WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSES

It is the responsibility of award holders to notify Education Services immediately upon withdrawal from their programme of study. The Authority is entitled to reclaim all money previously paid but, where progress and attendance have been satisfactory for at least 13 term-time weeks, allowances are normally given up to the student's last date of (regular) attendance. No recovery of approved tuition fees will be made where the student withdraws from the course for the undernoted reasons:-

- (a) Gains full-time employment.
- (b) Ill health of student (or in the case of single-parent students, ill health of dependent child).
- (c) Advised to leave by academic staff for reasons other than unsatisfactory conduct.
- (d) Gains a place on a Government sponsored training scheme.

12. APPEALS PROCEDURE

Any applicant who is refused a bursary may appeal against the decision. Such appeals must be made in writing to the Corporate Manager, Education Services and the grounds for appeal must be clearly stated.

13. DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984

The Authority operates a computerised bursaries assessment and filing system. Students are advised that information given on an application form will be stored on a computer system by the Authority for the purpose of assessment and payment of the bursary and for audit purposes.

West Lothian Council
Education and Cultural Services
Lindsay House
South Bridge Street
BATHGATE
West Lothian EH48 1TS

 01506 776390

Information is available in Braille, tape, large print and community languages.
Please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service on 0131 242 8181.

هذه المعلومات متوفرة بلغة بريل وعلى شريط وبخط كبير وبلغات الجالية.
الرجاء الإتصال بخدمة الترجمة على الهاتف 0131 242 8181

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