

Guide to applying for financial support for 19 year olds + funding your course with an Advanced Learner Loan.

NB. If you are aged 19-23 on the first day of your course and it is your first full level 3 qualification, you may receive your course for free through government funding. Please speak to our Admissions Team before you progress any further.

Please read the following in conjunction with the Advanced Learning Loan Factsheet and FAQs sheet to ensure you have all the information you need to make an informed decision.

Advanced Learner Loans (ALLs) help people aged 19 and over undertake vocational, technical and professional qualifications at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6. Student Finance England (SFE) administers Advanced Learning Loans on behalf of the Student Loans Company (SLC). ALLs pay for your course fee only and you have to repay these. When you apply to SFE you are only applying for support for one year at a time. You will need to apply again for your second year unless SFE write to you and advise differently. Your loan will be paid directly to the College.

When should I apply for this support?

Once you have applied to Bishop Auckland College/SWDT for your course and been successfully interviewed, our Student Admissions Team will send you an **'Offer and Funding Information letter'**. On receipt of this letter, apply for your loan online at <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>. Applications take approximately 2-3 weeks to process. Once you have been assessed by SFE, they will send you a **'Notice of Entitlement'**. If you have been approved for your loan, you should bring this letter with you to our Admissions team to enroll onto your course. Enrolment secures your place. Therefore, it is important you act quickly.

Fee liability and what happens if you leave your course early –

If you have applied for a loan and it has been approved but you subsequently decide not to start the course, don't worry, we will not receive any payments and you can inform SFE that you no longer require the loan.

If you have been attending your course, please refer to our Fee Policy.

Applying for your finance

Visit www.gov.uk/student-finance for general advice and guidance on Advanced Learning Loans. You can then navigate to the **apply on line** link to begin your loan application.

As part of the application process you will also need to verify your identity. You can do this via the following two options **ONLY**:

- **Provide your valid UK passport details.**
- **Provide your original birth certificate/adoption certificate accompanied by a completed 'Birth or Adoption certificate form'. If you are required to send student finance your birth certificate, please send this recorded delivery and include an "Evidence Return Form" which can be located at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-learner-loan-evidence-return-form>**

You must print, sign, date and return a student declaration form to Student Finance England. If you fail to do this, your loan will not be assessed and you will be unable to enroll and start college. Once

your loan has been assessed and finalized you will be issued a **'Notice of Entitlement'** letter. Bring this to us and complete your enrolment. **Please ensure any confidential information such as your birth certificate is sent recorded delivery.**

Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund

This fund provides financial or 'in-kind' help to eligible learners who are funding their course with an Advanced Learner Loan. These funds are aimed at those most in need. You can apply for support to help meet the costs of childcare, course essential items and transport.

Your Advanced Learner Loan must be approved by SFE and you must sign and return your student declaration form to them before applying for ALL Bursary Funding.

It is therefore vital that you make your Advanced Learning Loan application sufficiently in advance as we cannot support any costs accrued prior to this and you would be liable for any childcare costs incurred up to the date of loan approval. **This fund is cash limited and operated on a first-come, first-served basis.**

Eligibility

To be eligible learners must be in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan and have a household income **of up to £35,000 unless otherwise stated.** Household income includes tax credits, benefits, earnings and any other income **received by the adults in your household.**

Evidence of eligibility

- Learners in receipt of qualifying benefits, a letter from DWP that states the benefit the learner is entitled to (they must be entitled to the benefits in their own right). The evidence must confirm that the young person can be in further education or training (some young people in receipt of benefits are not allowed to participate).
- Learners who are in receipt of Universal Credit must supply screen shots of their 3 x recent UC statements. This must be the full statement showing the breakdown of payment including all payments and deductions. Evidence of a tenancy report or child benefit letter/child's birth certificate may also be required.
- Learners who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority - this is the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority. Evidence of household income is also required so that your financial need can be assessed.

Please be advised, giving false or incomplete evidence or information that leads to an incorrect or overpayment may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered. This may result in a referral to the police with the possibility of prosecution.

If you received learner support in 2023-2024

You only need to complete a new application for financial help if your financial circumstances have changed. If they have not, please complete a self-declaration form which can be found at <https://bacoll.ac.uk/Funding> , section 4.

Here's a further explanation of these funds:

Support Type	Household income eligibility
Free Meals - £5.00 per day Travel Kit and uniform Stationery Trips Books Support for University/Open Days	Household income under £35,000 (based on tax year ending April 2024 or current income)
Childcare	Household income under £50,000 (based on tax year ending April 2024 or current income)

Free meals

If your household income is under £60,000 you may be eligible for funding of up to £5.00 per day towards a meal. It can be accessed at both campuses from the eateries and campus shop.

Travel Support

We operate a travel scheme in conjunction with Arriva and Weardale Travel. Learners must be undertaking a full or part time further education course (excludes full cost courses and HE courses). Eligible learners can travel free on any Arriva North East or Weardale Travel bus required to get to and from campus and work placement, Monday to Friday, 0630 to 2200, during term time only. You must live at least 1.5 miles away from campus to qualify.

Arriva operate with a smart card bus pass which will allow you free travel to and from your campus.

Learners who are required to travel on a Weardale Service will be issued with a bespoke bus pass.

This will be issued to you if your funding application is successful. You will need to collect this from the Student Funding and Transport Assistant on your first day in college.

If you withdraw from your course you must return your smart card bus pass card to the Student Funding and Transport Officer. Failure to do so will result in an invoice being issued to you. Should you lose your Arriva smart card or Weardale Bus Pass, there will be a £15 charge to replace this.

For those learners who are unable to travel independently because of a medical condition or Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), we would advise parents/carers to contact Durham County Hall to request information regarding their travel award scheme.

Learners using their own transport can apply for mileage costs but only where Arriva/Weardale do not provide a service bus which can be reasonably accessed.

All travel claims are subject to attendance checks and must be accompanied with receipts/tickets, where the claim is for use of public transport. Reimbursements are made monthly in areas, direct into your bank account. Mileage is paid at 26p per mile.

Uniform and kit costs (essential course items)

Learners should complete their kit/uniform order forms (as issued by the curriculum area) and submit these with their application for financial support. Alternatively, when you receive your outcome letter from your application, you will be requested to provide the sizing of items you require. We will order items on your behalf. The amount awarded is dependent on the course requirements. Please note you may need to purchase items before you start the course and the amount of grant awarded is not guaranteed to pay these costs in full. Reimbursements will only be made subject to proof of purchase. Not all learners will be eligible for this support. All funded items remain the property of Bishop Auckland College/SWDT. If you withdraw from your course you must return the items to avoid being invoiced for the cost.

For some courses, Kit and Uniform is included in the tuition Fee. Please speak to your head of school or e mail lisa.robson@bacoll.ac.uk to find out whether your course kit is included.

Stationery

If you require stationery, a basic stationery kit can be provided to you, please ensure you select this on your application form. This will be a one-off kit and will include the essentials required to attend your course.

Trips

From time to time the college arrange educational visits. If your household income is under the £35,000 threshold, your travel and accommodation will be funded under the Learner Support Funds. You will also receive a meal allowance of £5 per day. All funding including that for trips is based on a first come, first served basis.

Books

If you require any additional books to ensure you complete your course/aid you with the completion of your course, these can be provided to you. Please e mail finance@bacoll.ac.uk with the request and include your tutor in the e mail so it can be confirmed with them that this book is essential to you.

Support for university open days/interviews

Assistance to cover the main travel costs for learners who are attending a higher education open day or interview. The visit must take place during the 2024-2024 academic year. Evidence of the date of the open day/interview must be submitted.

Childcare funding (for Ofsted registered childcare only)

Childcare funding is for course timetabled periods only (i.e. not academic holidays, half term breaks). Learners eligible for government funded childcare sessions must apply for and utilise these for their course timetabled days. We will however agree funding for wrap around childcare requirements that

exceed these.

You will not receive funding for unauthorised absences. If you cannot attend your course due to sickness or your child's sickness, you must contact Student Services by 9.00am, per each day of absence. This will ensure that your reason for absence is recorded. Failure to do this is deemed as unauthorised absence. Contacting your tutor direct or sending a message via another learner is not acceptable and your funding will be affected.

Childcare funding will cease with immediate effect if you withdraw from course OR your attendance falls below 95%.

You must provide the required notice (usually 1 month) to the childcare provider in lieu of your course end date (as detailed on your learning agreement) or withdrawal. Charges incurred due to failure to give notice are your responsibility.

Childcare providers **must** submit invoices to us on a **monthly** basis. The invoice must be addressed to Bishop Auckland College, show a breakdown of the session dates attended and the cost per session. The learner name must also be included. This should be within 28 days of the end of the billing period. Failure to submit monthly invoices may result in refusal of payment. Invoices can be emailed to finance@bacoll.ac.uk or posted to the Finance Department, DLSF, Bishop Auckland College, Woodhouse Lane, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL14 6JZ.

Invoices are paid in arrears as payment is subject to your attendance. We cannot make childcare payments in advance. Unauthorised absences will be deducted from the value of the invoice. The remaining balance will therefore be your responsibility. Childcare providers should liaise with the learner directly with regards to this.

Any subsequent changes to childcare needs must first be authorised by Student Funding and Transport. Learners should do this at their earliest opportunity to ensure funding is still available.

To be eligible for this support your household income **must be £50,000 or less**. Household income includes tax credits, benefits, earnings and any other income received by the adults in your household. Learners aged under 21 at the start of their course will not be eligible for this funding and would need to apply for Care to Learn which is explained further in this guidance.

How do I apply for Funding?

You will need to complete an application form via www.bacoll.ac.uk/learnersupportfunds attaching the relevant evidence of household income. You must evidence the current total income received into your **household**. This includes the income of your spouse/partner. Please provide a copy of your Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN) 2023/2024 if you are in receipt of Tax Credits. We cannot accept 'Provisional' TCANs. If you're not in receipt of tax credits please supply a copy of your current household benefits letter (dated in the last month) or copies of your 2023/23 P60s. Please supply photocopies only as we are unable to return evidence. If you receive Universal Credit, please provide the most recent 3 statements. You must include the breakdown of payments and any deductions.

Other Support:

Care to Learn (C-2-L)

If you are a young parent, C-2-L can help pay for your childcare and any additional travel costs whilst you are studying. You must:

- have started your course or study programme before you turn **20**
- be the parent or main carer **and** be in receipt of Child Benefit for the child(ren)
- be living and studying in England and be either a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country
- using an Ofsted registered childcare provider (this can be a childminder, nursery or

You can apply on line at the Care to Learn website - www.gov.uk/care-to-learn or contact their helpline on 0800 122 8989.

Emergency/hardship support

Any learner with exceptional hardship or domestic emergency needs can request financial support to enable them to remain on course. This is normally a one-off support payment or very short-term support. It cannot be used as a substitute for state benefits or living costs.

Terms and Conditions of Funding

Attendance

Financial support from the national schemes or funds from Bishop Auckland College/SWDT are subject to learners maintaining a minimum 95% attendance level. Where learners fall below this, we reserve the right to revoke all funding. We will invoice parent/carers for reasonable recovery of the value of these items.

Withdrawals

If you withdraw from your course you will not receive further financial support. You may also have to repay any financial support you have been awarded. You must return your kit/uniform and Campus I.D. card. Failure to do so will result in an invoice being issued for the total cost of these items.

Appeals

If you believe your funding application has not been assessed correctly, you do not receive a grant or you are not happy with the level of support allocated, you can appeal. Your appeal should be made in writing and addressed to:

Appeals, Finance Manager, Bishop Auckland College, Woodhouse Lane, Bishop Auckland, DL14 6JZ.

You can only appeal once regarding a specific situation - if your appeal is declined, you are unable to re-appeal for the same reason again, unless you can provide new additional information to support your case. The appeal decision is final. If you are unhappy with the decision you can make use of the College's formal complaints procedure.

Further Discretionary Learner Support (DLSF) conditions

- If you are on a two-year course (Commenced in 2023-2024 academic year) you are not required to submit a whole new application for 2024-2024. You will need to complete a Learner Support Self Declaration form to confirm that your household income has not changed. If your household situation and income has changed, you will be required to submit a new application.
- You will not receive funding if you have outstanding debts to us or your household income is above the rates stated.

All guidance and eligibility criteria mentioned in this booklet are correct at the time of print, but we reserve the right to amend any of this information during the academic year following government changes to eligibility criteria.

Finance Department

The Finance staff are here to ensure you receive the best advice and support with your application for financial support. If you need help, or would like to speak on an individual basis, please do not hesitate to contact the Finance Department to discuss or arrange a meeting. The office is available throughout the summer holidays.

You can contact the Finance Department by telephone on:

01388 443113

01388 443115

01388 743166

01388 443037

or by e-mail at finance@bacoll.ac.uk or by post at the following address:

Finance Department
DLSF
Bishop Auckland College
Woodhouse Lane
Bishop Auckland
Co Durham
DL14 6JZ