



**SOUTH ESSEX  
COLLEGES GROUP**

**PayMyStudent**

## Financial Support (College Bursary) - Applying Online

### How do I Apply?

Applying for Financial Support is easy using the PayMyStudent Bursary Portal. You can apply online and submit your evidence. We can then assess your eligibility for support. Once you have applied you can also access payment information and any documents we send you. **Applications for September will open in early July, please apply as soon as possible. Follow this link to access our portal [www.southessex.ac.uk/finance/fees-and-funding](http://www.southessex.ac.uk/finance/fees-and-funding)** you will need to scroll down to Student Bursary (Financial Support)

- You will need to register first with your student ID number and date of birth. You will receive your Student ID number when you enrol. This will be on your Student ID Card and enrolment paperwork. You can apply as soon as you have enrolled but we ask that you wait 24 hours to allow our system to update and find your details.
- PayMyStudent will send you an activation link by text or by email (you can choose) the email will be the one you gave us when you applied to the college and your College student email (you will have access to this email once you start College), please make sure we have the correct details for you. When you receive the text or email, click on the link to activate, you will then be able to login to start your application.

### Application

- Once you have logged in, follow the link to proceed with your application. You will be asked details about your personal circumstances and the income for the household that you live in. 16 to 19 students from households with a household income of £35,000 or less are eligible for support. 19+ students from households on benefits or with household income of £40,000 or less are eligible for support.
- The portal will tell you which evidence of income we need; you can easily upload this using your smartphone camera or files

scanned onto your laptop/pc. To upload your evidence click in the highlighted box to 'drop or upload files'



If English isn't your first language there is a Google Translate option, click on the drop down box on the top right of PayMyStudent and select your chosen language.

## Bank Details



To provide you with financial support we need your bank details. These have to be yours (students bank details), as we are not able to pay funds into a third party bank account (unless there are exceptional circumstances). Your bank account number and sort code will be validated when you click on 'Next'.



We encrypt all bank account numbers for security reasons, the portal will only ever show the last 4 digits of your account number once the details have been saved.



If your bank account shows your name differently, eg. you have another name on your birth certificate, please let us know so we don't reject it. You will need to supply us with evidence of this before we can approve any payment.

## Declaration and Submitting Your Application Form



Ensure you read through the declaration and that you fully understand the terms and conditions of receiving a bursary before submitting your application. If you have any questions please get in touch with us, we will be happy to discuss them with you.



Tick the box to declare that you agree to the declaration, then write your name in the box below. You can then click on 'Submit' to finish your application. You will receive confirmation that the application has been submitted, this sometimes takes a minute or so and may appear to freeze so don't worry if this happens.

## Questionnaires



Once you have submitted your application you may be asked to provide us with more information, depending on the information you provided in your bursary application. Make sure you do this as it might delay us assessing you for financial support if you don't complete any questionnaires.

## Frequently asked questions

### **The portal won't let me register or says that the information I am providing is incorrect?**

*We need an email address or telephone number on our system in order to activate your account, these will be the ones you provided when you applied to the college. Email us with your details if you need us to check if we have the correct details recorded for you. If you still cannot register let us know and we will look into this. Please remember you must be enrolled to apply.*

*Its also worth checking the 'spam' or 'junk' folder on your inbox, as some email providers might divert our emails to either of these.*

### **I haven't applied or enrolled for a course yet, can I still apply for a bursary?**

*You can apply for a bursary once we have you on our system and you have enrolled. Make sure you apply and enrol as soon as possible to prevent delays.*

### **You have returned my application and requested more evidence, does this mean you have refused my bursary application?**

*No, we haven't refused your application, we just need further evidence to assess you. It might be that the evidence you supplied has missing information or is not recently dated. We try to be clear when we write to you but if you don't understand what we need to see please get in touch with us, we'll be happy to explain.*

### **You have asked for payment statements for my Universal Credit, I manage this on my phone and I don't get sent any letters. How do I provide this?**

*We need to see all the calculations that were used when your last 3 monthly statements were produced (we need to see every page including deductions made and your personal details). This will tell us if you are entitled to Free College Meals so it is important info for us to assess you. Depending on your phone you can usually save the payment statement by clicking on 'print this statement' then opting to save it as a PDF file. You should then be able to upload it to PayMyStudent. We will also accept Screenshots so long as all the information is visible.*

### **I don't have a bank account in my name yet, can you pay my bursary to my parents account?**

*We have strict guidelines about how bursary payments are made, unfortunately we are not allowed to pay money to a third party bank account. Most high street banks offer bank accounts for 16 year olds. If there are exceptional circumstances please get in touch with us.*

**I am on a Higher Education course at South Essex College, can I apply for bursary funding?**

*You can apply for Financial support for Higher Education on PayMyStudent. Applications open on 16th November 2026. For further information of the support available and eligibility for support, please contact the Higher Education team at [HESupport@southessex.ac.uk](mailto:HESupport@southessex.ac.uk) .*

**How long will it take to have my bursary application assessed?**

*We will start assessing further education applications received before the end of August, we aim to let you know the outcome of your application as soon as we can.*

**I received free meals at school, does this automatically continue once I start college?**

*This doesn't automatically continue. We assess you for free meals as part of the online bursary application, and we need to see the required evidence in order to assess your eligibility for this. The portal will ask for the evidence we need to see as you work your way through it.*

**I applied for a bursary last year, why do I have to apply again? My financial circumstances are the same.**

*The government provides us with a new allocation of money each academic year to help students, guidelines for allocating this change and so do peoples financial circumstances. You will need to reapply each year.*

**What happens if I withdraw?**

*If you choose to discontinue your studies during the period for which assistance is provided you may be required to repay your award. We will review this on a case by case basis.*

***PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO <NoReply-SECCardPayments@southessex.ac.uk> and/or send any information or documents to this email address, we do not receive these emails and this will delay your application. Please use the email below***

**If you need to contact us, you can email us or visit us on campus:**

Email: [Funding@southessex.ac.uk](mailto:Funding@southessex.ac.uk)

## ***Appendix 1***

### **How we process your application**

#### **How do we decide what to award?**

Our awards are based on an assessment of the financial support a student needs to participate on their course. This will be different for every student and every course. Eligibility for an award is based on Household Income (HHI).

#### **What is our eligibility criteria?**

16 to 19 students from households with a household income of £35,000 or less are eligible for support. 19+ students with household income of £40,000 or less are eligible for support.

#### **What HHI is included?**

Salary (wage slips), we calculate using your NET pay as well as any benefit income e.g. Universal Credit / Legacy benefits.

#### **What HHI is excluded?**

Disability Living allowance (DLA), Personal independent payment (PIP) , Child benefit, Foster Care payments.

#### **What evidence do I need to upload?**

##### ***Salary – Wage slips***

The most recent payslips for ***all*** adults working within your household, the name and address must be clearly visible. Payslips must cover a full three months. If paid monthly, you will need to upload the 3 most recent payslips. If paid weekly, you will need to upload the 12 most recent payslips.

##### ***Benefits***

Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Income Support

Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)

Guaranteed Pension Credit

Housing Benefit Award

Universal Credit Award

Please provide a recent benefit letter dated within 3 months of application, including name, address. **Please provide copies of all pages of the award notice.**

If you do not have a letter dated within 3 months we will take a letter no older than 12 months from the date of your application with 3 months' worth of full bank statements showing your name and address with the benefit going into the account. We will not accept screen shots of bank statements.

#### *Working Tax Credits/Child Tax Credits*

You will need to provide a 2026/2027 Tax Credit notice letter confirming income from 2025/2026. **Please provide copies of all pages of the notice.**

#### *Universal Credit*

You will need to provide the three most recent full statements. We require all parts of these statements, including the name and address and the deductions at the bottom. We suggest clicking the "Print to PDF / Save as PDF" option on the statement instead of uploading screenshots. Screenshots will be accepted but will need to be the full award which is normally 4-5 screenshots per statement. Please do not send us screenshots of the to do list or journal as this is incorrect and will not be accepted.

#### *Other evidence*

If you are receiving support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999:  
We will need to see your Home Office Letter or ARC Card (front and back)

### **Vulnerable Bursary students**

If you are 16-18 and applying for the Vulnerable Bursary you will need:

- In Care or a Care Leaver:  
A Letter from your Social or Support Worker confirming your care status
- Receiving Income Support (IS), or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner:  
A recent Income Support benefit letter benefit letter in the student's name, dated within 3 months of application, including name and address.  
Or 3 x Universal Credit statements in the student's name. **Please provide copies of all pages of the award notice.**
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right **as well as** Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right:  
A recent DLA/PIP benefit letter dated within 3 months of application, including name and address **and** 3 x Universal Credit statements in the student's name. **Please provide copies of all pages of the award notice.**

**Applications will not be processed until the College has received all required evidence.**

## **Appendix 2**

### **Vulnerable Bursary**

If you are a student aged 16-18 and are in one of the defined vulnerable groups, you may be eligible for a Vulnerable Bursary worth up to £1200. Students will be awarded the amount of support they need to participate based on their individual needs and will not automatically be awarded the full £1200. Support may include travel, essential books, uniform, equipment and meals (if eligible).

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- receiving Income Support (IS), or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right

#### **How do I apply?**

Applying for the Vulnerable Bursary is easy using the PayMyStudent Bursary Portal. You can apply online and submit your evidence. We can then assess your eligibility for support. Once you have applied you can also access payment information and any documents we send you.

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#### **How is my Award administered?**

All awards are administered on PayMyStudent the College Bursary Online system. We will normally provide travel via a 'season ticket', meals (if eligible) will be provided via a College Meal Card and any other associated course costs will be funded for you. Any uniform/equipment will be paid direct to your bank account on the date detailed in your award letter (you will be expected to upload a receipt following your purchase on PayMyStudent). You will only receive the costs you need to participate. If there are no associated costs you will not receive an award.

#### **What if I need more than £1200?**

If your needs exceed £1200 we may be able to award additional funds from our 16 to 18 Bursary Fund. To do this we may need to see evidence of Household Income (depending on your individual circumstances). For children in Foster Care or a Special Guardianship Order this evidence is required. Please note that we do not include Foster Care payments when we assess Household Income. Children in residential care are excluded from providing evidence of Household Income. For further information regarding Household Income please see 'How we process your application' (Appendix 1).