

HE Bursary Policy

2026-2027

Scope and Purpose

This Bursary Guidance is for applicants, students at Waltham Forest College (also referred to here as WFC) studying HNC and HND qualifications.

These policies and procedures must be followed when making Waltham Forest College Bursary applications/awards and are also for use when considering potential student appeals.

Key Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the Waltham Forest College Bursaries lies with the Head of Welfare and Wellbeing.

- 2.2. The key responsibility of the Head of Welfare and Wellbeing, with the support of Student Finance Team is to ensure that the process as outlined below is followed and to confirm awards in line with agreed criteria. Students will be advised, and payment will be authorised and paid through the Student Finance team via BACS.
- 2.3. Waltham Forest College is committed to a fair and transparent policy in respect of the award and administration of its bursaries.
- 2.4. Waltham Forest College reviews its Bursary Scheme annually.
- 2.5. The college provides bursaries to those students who have been assessed by Student Finance England (SFE) as being eligible for means tested support towards their maintenance costs.

The bursary is only provided to students on full time courses. The Student Loans Company will assess all students' financial eligibility. Students do need to:

- Apply to SFE for means testing and student support each academic year.
- Give consent for the SLC to share their household income information each academic year.

Without this assessment, Bursary will not be awarded.

Students receive the following notifications regarding the bursary:

- Students are initially notified by letter (from the Student Loans Company) if they are eligible to receive the bursary. Please note this only confirms their eligibility, not whether they have been awarded the bursary.

Available Bursaries for Higher Education 2025-2026

There are discretionary bursaries available for full-time HE Students. Awards to students will be towards tuition costs, travel costs, food, books and equipment or other similar institutional services such as trips. Bursary is set aside for those in greatest financial hardship; to support them with the ongoing costs of being at College. Funds are limited and allocated on a first come, first served basis

General Regional Bursary

Successful applicants will be awarded a bursary, bursaries will vary and will be tailored to those in greatest need, the maximum award will be £1,000 (pro-rata amount for part time students studying a minimum of 25% intensity of the full time equivalent).

Care Leavers Bursary

A bursary of £1000 per year is available to students who are assessed as a care leaver, using the criteria provided by Student Finance England. The bursary will be paid in two instalments within the first 6 weeks of the start of each term. Students should contact Student Welfare to discuss eligibility.

Internal Progression Bursary

For students progressing internally from a Level 3 course in the college to a full-time HNC/D there is a one-off bursary payment of £250 paid in the first year of study and within the first term of study after the first six weeks.

These bursaries are available to HE students commencing study in 2025/26. There are different arrangements according to which year you commenced your studies. Details of relevant bursaries for all students are available on the college's learner portal. Assistance is available from the Student Welfare or the Finance department on how to access the information.

These will be awarded based on key criteria for all applicants and specific criteria to identify those most in need of support. The total allocation will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis based on the date an application has been submitted.

Successful applicants are notified via college e-mail. Unsuccessful bursary applicants have access to applying to the College Hardship Fund.

Awards will be made in two instalments: once when the bursary has been approved and the second in April 2025. Payments will be dependent on the production of the required evidence and at least 90% attendance or being on track to achieve your qualification.

Hardship Fund

At Waltham Forest College, we are committed to supporting students facing financial difficulties through our hardship fund. We believe that every student deserves the opportunity to pursue their education without being hindered by financial burdens. Our hardship fund aims to provide assistance to those in need, ensuring that all students have access to resources and support to help them succeed academically and personally. This fund also supports IT course related costs. The hardship fund details are available from Student Welfare or Finance. Meeting essential eligibility criterion does not equate to an entitlement to a bursary. This is a one-year benefit, not a recurrent annual entitlement, annual applications must be submitted.

The fund may be able to assist with costs where equipment is required to enhance a student's access to learning or to increase levels of achievement. All items purchased by the support funds remains the property of the College and must be returned if students when they complete their programme of study.

Eligibility and Criteria

The criteria set out in the guidance below have been written in line with our annual Access and Participation Statement the intent of ensuring the limited funds are allocated to identified target groups.

Students must meet the following criteria:

- Be enrolled/holding an offer (as confirmed by Admissions) on a Waltham Forest College HE (HNC/D or HTQ programmes on a full basis, but not modular programmes)
- Be paying the expected tuition fee in full.
- Be a UK 'home' student.

Have applied for and be in receipt of the full student maintenance loan prior to the bursary application and have a household income of less than £25,000 per annum, as assessed by Student Finance England, or be paying the course fee in full.

Students who fall into one or more of the following categories (and have not been in receipt of bursary previously) will be prioritised for funding support:

1. Care Leavers' Bursary
2. Band 1 as defined in the table below of SFE assessed household income
3. Extreme Hardship Fund

Bursaries are limited and will be prioritised for the following groups: Students who have not been in receipt of a bursary previously (Evidence source: ProSolution/previous college records).

Those from under-represented groups as identified:

- Care leaver (as defined by any adult who has spent time in care) (Self-declared on admission with supporting evidence).
- Those residents in Walthamstow or areas of low participation based on postcode: In the instance of postcode, those in areas of low participation rates in surrounding boroughs will be prioritised. These will be those where the postcode states 'yes' in a Uni Connect target area.

Assessments

All income and benefits (including housing benefit, council tax benefit, working tax credits, child tax credits, etc.) are taken into account. For students who are self-employed, the College will assess income based on Gross profit, but taking into account any business expenditure.

SFE Assessed Household Income	WFC Bursary
£0-£25,000	Band 1
£25,001-£41,999	Band 2
More than £42,000	None

The total annual bursary allocation will be awarded on a first come first served basis based on the date an application has been submitted.

Bursaries are awarded at the discretion of Waltham Forest College and are not a student entitlement.

Administration Process for 2025-2026 for HE Bursaries Administered by Waltham Forest College

Application

Applications should only be submitted on line using the following link : HE (HNC & HND) Support - Waltham Forest College.

If the student has applied to Student Finance England and have given 'consent to share,' the College will be able to use this information to household income. If a student does not 'consent to share' with Student Finance England, Waltham Forest College will be unable to assess the student's financial situation and therefore it will not be possible to award a bursary.

If the student is currently self-funding, the student will need to supply evidence of household income. Evidence includes P60, payslips, and bank statements. Students will be able to apply via the Waltham Forest College website from the autumn term 2026.

The number of bursaries is limited, and therefore meeting the eligibility criteria cannot guarantee an award. Bursaries will be awarded by priority area. In the event of more applications than funds available, the College will use the date of application to make the final decision on the award. *If additional funds are provided throughout the academic year, bursary awards may be increased at the discretion of the college.

Bursaries are awarded by discretion and by application. Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis according to need.

A panel will review successful applications prior to awarding funds. We will inform all those who have been successful within 28 days of the application. The bursary panel shall report to the Director of Finance and Vice Principal on a quarterly basis and to the HESB from time to time

Students who do not qualify for a bursary can apply for support through the HE Hardship Fund, which is managed separately from the HE Bursary. The panel will meet monthly during July, August and September and at least once per half term thereafter to review progress and budgets.

Students can appeal the decision made by the bursary panel if they can provide evidence of mitigating circumstances. Students should be aware that appeals are usually only successful if they have new evidence attached. Appeals need to be made within 10 working days of students receiving notification that their bursary payment has been withheld. Please see below for appeals process.

Students may apply for more than one bursary award (see below) but will only be awarded one bursary (usually the highest value for which the student is eligible).

Payment

Bursaries will be paid in 2 equal instalments throughout the year on the condition that the recipient has achieved at least 90% attendance at college or is on track to achieve. Where bursary eligibility changes (for example, due to non-attendance at college) Waltham Forest College will recover any payment by either:

- Reducing any subsequent bursary payments to recover the overpaid amount (this may occur where a student is continuing with their studies).

- Requesting the overpayment be repaid in full. Failure to repay the amount due may result in the commencement of litigation.

Outstanding Fees and Other Monies Owing to Waltham Forest College

Where a student has fees or other monies owing to Waltham Forest College relating to their studies, Waltham Forest College may withhold the bursary payment until such time as the outstanding amount has been paid. Please see Waltham Forest College's Fees Policy for further information about the non-payment of fees.

Withdrawals

Students must be fully enrolled at the time that the bursary payment is due. No payment will be made to students who have agreed breaks in their studies. Students who withdraw prior to the payment date will not be entitled to a pro-rata payment.

Appeals

Unsuccessful applicants wishing to appeal should write to the Director of HE & Academic Standards within 10 working days of the date of notification of the outcome of their application, stating clearly the grounds for appeal.

Appeals will only be considered where there is evidence that a procedural irregularity has occurred in processing the application. Appeals against the content of the published Waltham Forest College Bursary guidance itself cannot be accepted.