



Bursary Fund Policy

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1.0 Introduction

QEGSMAT (the Trust) provides 16-19 bursaries to eligible students to help them overcome specific financial barriers so they can remain in education.

We are committed to:

- Distributing 16-19 bursaries via a fair and equal process that is transparent, accountable and easily understood.
- Ensuring information about the bursary scheme and the application process are well promoted and easy to access.
- Widening access to, and participation in, sixth form education.
- Monitoring and reviewing our policies to ensure effectiveness.
- Setting high targets and objectives to develop a culture of continuous improvement.
- Spending the post 16 bursary funding on helping eligible students to overcome any financial barriers to education.

2.0 QEGSMAT's responsibilities

The Trust is responsible for setting eligibility criteria for students within the Trust.

The Trust will set conditions for receiving the bursary, such as regular attendance and a positive approach to study.

Arrangements for applying for bursaries will be straightforward and confidential.

Each student who applies for the bursary will be assessed by the sixth form pastoral team and evidence will be obtained to support each application.

The Trust will claim vulnerable bursaries from the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) for each eligible student.

Records will be kept by the Trust of all assessments and payments.

3.0 Raising awareness and take-up of the 16-19 bursary fund

To raise awareness of the bursary, the Trust employs different marketing activities, including the following:

- Posting information about the bursary on the school website and in the prospectus, as well as on posters around the institution.
- Distributing information at the sixth form open evening for Year 11 students from other schools.
- Providing tutors with information to inform discussions between tutors and students.
- Working with the school's pastoral team, who help the most disadvantaged, to identify those who may be eligible for vulnerable groups.

- Sending text messages throughout the year to inform students of the financial support available – in the summer term text messages are sent to inform students that the application form can be downloaded and completed to check eligibility.

To identify vulnerable students that may be eligible for a bursary, the Trust works with the LA, LAC education services and care leaver services to help and encourage students to apply for a bursary.

The Trust works with local stakeholders to identify the vulnerable students that may be eligible:

- Ensuring QEGSMAT family support workers are fully aware of bursary arrangements who will develop links with local agencies working with vulnerable people e.g. social services, to identify eligible students before enrolment.

The Trust ensures that, in any marketing materials and the application form, procedures for how the institution maintains confidentiality are outlined to encourage more students to apply for the bursary.

4.0 Eligibility

Students who are aged 16 or over and under 19 years old on the 31st August before the academic year in question will qualify for bursaries for that academic year.

The Trust operates a no-cash policy, and as such, bursary payments will, where possible, be paid in-kind or via the BACS system direct to the student's bank account.

Where a student turns 19 during their programme of study, they will continue to receive the bursary up until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or until the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner.

The Trust will only pay bursaries to students aged 16 or over, unless in exceptional circumstances e.g. where a student is following an accelerated study programme.

The Trust will use its discretion to decide whether a student under the age of 16 is eligible; this is explained further in Section 5.

Students can apply more than once if their circumstances change. In this case, they will be reassessed, including a one-to-one interview to determine if there are any exceptional circumstances to consider.

Most students who receive a bursary will get a tailored award from the discretionary bursary. Students in need of more support can apply for a vulnerable bursary.

5.0 Discretionary bursaries

The Trust will ensure that discretionary funding is allocated to the students who are most in need of financial support.

QEGSMAT's eligibility criteria for receiving a discretionary bursary includes:

- Students living in a low-income household (outlined in 7.3).
- Students who are from a single parent family or have one or more dependent siblings in their family.
- Students who have additional responsibilities, such as being a young carer or parent.
- Students who travel more than eight miles to the institution.

Discretionary bursaries may be awarded for students in low-income households. The amount awarded will be dependent on the amount of income – this is allocated on different levels, as follows:

- L1 discretionary bursary: total income is equal to, or less than, £16,190.
- L2 discretionary bursary: total income is more than £16,190, but less than £25,000.
- L3 discretionary bursary: total income is more than £25,000, but less than £29,000.

Students who apply will be assessed individually. This assessment will be documented and evidence to support the claims will be obtained and retained for auditing purposes.

The assessment will be based on a student's financial needs and the Trust will consider any unearned income, such as shares/investments, savings and rental income.

The Trust will manage the discretionary bursary to keep payments within budget.

6.0 Bursaries for vulnerable students

The eligibility criteria for receiving a vulnerable bursary includes students who are:

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

Students who claim ESA or Universal Credit in their own right, are able to do so whilst living in the parental home, there is no requirement to be living independently.

The Trust will remind parents (via the application form) that they will not be able to continue to claim Child Benefit if the student successfully applies for ESA.

Students who are in one or more of these categories can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200.

Where a vulnerable student is on a course lasting 30 weeks or more and is participating full-time, they will be eligible to receive £1,200.

The Trust may pay a student in a vulnerable group more than £1,200 if it believes the student needs extra help to remain in education.

Where a vulnerable student is on a part-time course, the institution can make a reduction based on an hourly or daily rate.

Proof will be needed to evidence that a student is eligible for the bursary, for example:

- In care/care leaver: written confirmation, such as a letter or an email, of current or previous LAC status from the relevant LA (the LA that looks after them or providers their leaving care services).
- In receipt of Income Support: a copy of the Income Support award notice, which must evidence that the student is entitled to the benefit in their own right, and confirm that the student can be in FE or training.
- In receipt of Universal Credit: copies of the Universal Credit Award notice from the last three months, which must evidence that the student is entitled to the benefit in their own right, as well as additional documentation to confirm their independent status e.g. a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificate, or utility bills.
- In receipt of Universal Credit/ESA and Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments: a copy of the Universal Credit or ESA award from DWP, as well as evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment.

The Trust will only submit a funding claim to the SBSS once sufficient evidence has been provided.

The Trust is responsible for assessing whether students are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary.

The Trust may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary as they fall within one or more of the vulnerable groups, the bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support. If financial needs are already met and there are no other costs, the institution may decide not to allocate a bursary to the student, for example:

- A student attends specialist residential provision that covers their education costs in full.
- A student undertakes a distance learning programme and there are no financial barriers to participation e.g. no travel or food costs.

- A student is in LA care and education costs are covered in full by the LA.
- A student is financially supported by their partner.

Where the Trust decides that a student is ineligible for funding, the reasons for this will be explained to the student and/or the student's parents/carers during a face-to-face meeting followed by written confirmation.

If a student or the student's parents/carers still want to claim a bursary for vulnerable groups they must inform the Trust. The Trust will then consider the particular circumstances in each case and assess whether:

- No bursary should be awarded as the student has no financial needs; or
- A reduced bursary should be awarded as the level of financial help needed is limited.

7.0 Paying bursary funding to eligible students

Payments will be paid in-kind rather than in cash – this may include, for example, travel passes, vouchers, required clothing, books or equipment.

Where in-kind payments are given to students within vulnerable groups, the Trust will explain the value of these payments to the student and how these have been deducted from the total £1,200.

The Trust has the right to determine how often payments are made – when doing so, the following will be considered:

- The reason the bursary was awarded.
- The student's circumstances.
- Local arrangements.

The Trust will not pay a bursary to students in large or lump sums.

In order to decide how best to use individual students' bursary funding, the Trust employs the following procedures:

- Every student who qualifies for a bursary is offered an interview with a member of the sixth form pastoral team to decide the best way to allocate their support.
- Priority areas are addressed first, including travel to school, equipment costs and support with studies.
- Students are allocated a higher amount of funding at the beginning of their course to address the priority areas.
- A percentage of the funding is kept back as a hardship fund to respond to any emergencies that may arise during the year.

If students or their parents/carers have any queries about payments they should contact the Head of Sixth Form.

8.0 Conditions for receiving bursary funding

Receipt of a vulnerable or discretionary bursary will be conditional on the student meeting the agreed standards set by the Trust.

The conditions of payment will be clear and accessible to students, as well as being thoroughly explained as part of the induction process.

Evidence that the student has seen and agreed to the conditions will be kept for audit, such as an agreement signed by the student, in accordance with Section 9.0.

Students in receipt of bursaries must have 95% attendance at timetabled lessons unless the absence is authorised.

Students that are absent due to sickness will be expected to present a note from a qualified medical practitioner if their absence is longer than five school days.

Holidays outside timetabled school holiday times are not permitted.

Students in receipt of bursaries will be expected to abide by the Behavioural Policy of the Trust.

Where there are concerns regarding a student's attendance or behaviour, a member of the sixth form pastoral team will discuss the issue with the student and consider individual exceptional circumstances before withholding any payments.

The Trust will ensure that all parents/carers and students are aware of the possible impact that attendance may have on payments, outlined in the application form.

The Trust will stop payments where a student has been absent for a period of four continuous weeks or more, excluding holidays or if there is evidence that the student intends not to return.

The Trust will also stop payments where a student withdraws themselves from a study programme.

Money may be taken back from students if it has not been spent for the reasons it was awarded to them. Before doing so the Trust will always consider the impact of this on the student.

The Trust may specify that students return any books and equipment at the end of their study programme for use by other students. This will be clearly communicated to students and their parents/carers upon confirming eligibility of the bursary.

9.0 Student declarations

Students and/or their parent/carer will sign a declaration when they apply for either a vulnerable or discretionary bursary, confirming that any evidence given in support of the application is correct.

By signing the declaration, the student and their parent/carer are agreeing to all the conditions and eligibility criteria.

The Trust will retain copies of the declaration and supporting documentation for six years – this includes:

For vulnerable groups:

- A copy of the funding claim sent to SBSS.
- Evidence showing that the student is eligible, as outlined in Section 6.
- Evidence of payments received from the SBSS e.g. bank statements.
- Evidence of payments made to the student.

For discretionary bursaries:

- Evidence used to assess eligibility, as outlined in Section 5.
- A copy of the student's individual assessment of actual financial need.
- Receipts for purchases made e.g. bus pass, clothes or book receipts.

10.0 Managing applications

All applications for the 16-19 bursary should be submitted by the 31st July of each academic year, allowing the Trust to correctly and fairly assess overall demands and distribute discretionary awards.

The Trust understands, however, that some needs may arise throughout the academic year. As such the Trust does not implement a cut-off date for applications, but it is advised that all applications are submitted by the 31st July wherever possible.

The date for applications to be submitted will be outlined in the bursary fund statement, the bursary application form and any marketing materials.

Application forms and marketing materials will outline that students who meet the criteria for bursaries for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to receive them e.g. if they do not have any financial needs or these needs are covered by alternative means.

11.0 Quality assurance

The Trust uses an eligibility checklist to confirm which documents have been provided for each student (as outlined in Section 9) – these relate to the following:

- The application process.
- The decision to award the specified amount of bursary.

- The funds that have been issued to the student.

The Trust maintains written records of the following:

- The number of applications received.
- The value of all bursaries awarded.
- The purpose of all bursaries awarded.
- Which applications qualified for the bursary and which did not.
- Brief descriptions of the Trust's justification for any decision to award a bursary or not.

The Trust retains copies of any documents the student has signed to give formal agreement to their conditions for payment, as well as any others mentioned in this section, for six years.

12.0 Fraud

The Trust has the right to investigate any suspected instances of fraud relating to bursary fund applications.

If evidence comes to light that supplied information is misleading or fraudulent, the Trust will stop any further payments and will attempt to recover any payments already provided to the student.

Where significant fraud is identified, the Trust will report this to the ESFA – this includes the following:

- The amount of money is in excess of £1,200.
- The particulars of the fraud are novel, unusual, systematic or complex.
- There is likely to be great public interest due to the nature of the fraud of the people involved.

The matter may also be referred to the police, with the possibility of the student and/or their parent/carer facing prosecution.

13.0 Conditions for using the bursary

The bursary fund will not be used by the Trust for any reasons which would give them a competitive advantage over other education trusts, such as:

- Enrolment or administration fees imposed by the institution.
- Fees for access to facilities in the institution.
- Block subsidy of the canteen.
- Block provision of equipment, material or books.
- Make bonus payments to reward attendance or achievement.

Block payments to students for attendance, irrespective of their actual financial need, will not be paid.

The bursary fund will only be used for supporting students who have a genuine financial difficulty which might prevent them from continuing in education, rather than acting as an incentive for attendance.

14.0 Complaints and appeals

All complaints and appeals must be made in writing in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Procedure. A copy of this may be obtained from the QEGSMAT website

If the complaint or appeal concerns operational processes or customer service for a vulnerable bursary funding claim, the SBSS will deal with the case. If the case is not resolved following this, it will be passed to the ESFA.

The Trust will act as a first point of contact for students who have complaints and will support students as much as possible throughout the complaints procedure.

Complaints made regarding the Trust and its provision of support will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Procedure.

Appendix 1
16-19 bursary application form

This form should be used by students of QEGSMAT (the Trust) when applying for a 16–19 bursary, to assess which bursary, if any, the student will be eligible for – either a vulnerable or discretionary bursary. Students should complete the form; however, a declaration should be signed by both the student and their parent/carer to indicate that the information given in the form is correct and up-to-date.

Section one – personal details

To be eligible for a bursary in the 2020/2021 academic year, students must be aged 16 or over, but under 19 at the 31st August 2020.

If you are over the age of 19, you may be eligible for a discretionary bursary if you are completing a study programme you began when aged between 16-18, or if you have an EHC plan. If this is the case, please ensure you complete **section four**.

Personal details			
Name:			
Date of birth:		Age:	
Home address:			
Home telephone no:			
Mobile telephone no:			
Email address:			

Section two – parental/carer details

Parental/carer details		
	Parent/carer one	Parent/carer two
Surname:		
Forename(s):		
Relationship to child:		

Home address:		
Home telephone no:		
Mobile telephone no:		
Work telephone no:		
Email address:		

Section three – vulnerable bursaries

This section is for students who may be eligible for a vulnerable bursary and an allowance of up to £1,200. If any of the below criteria apply, students are eligible to apply for a vulnerable bursary.

The institution assesses each application on a case-by-case basis and eligibility **does not entitle any student** to receive the bursary. If a student is eligible for a vulnerable bursary, but the institution does not believe the student requires it e.g. there are no financial needs, or financial needs are already met via alternative means, the institution may not allocate the student a bursary, or may offer a reduced allowance.

If any of the below criteria apply, please tick as appropriate. **If none apply, please skip this section and go to section four.**

Vulnerable bursaries		
Are you in care?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you a recent care leaver?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you receiving Income Support or Universal Credit as a result of supporting yourself financially or someone dependent on you and living with you, such as a child or partner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in your own right, as well as either Employment Support Allowance (ESA)* or Universal Credit?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

***Parents/carers should be aware that if their child successfully applies for ESA they will be unable to continue to claim Child Benefit.**

Evidence

If any of the above criteria apply, you must provide suitable evidence to support your application. Copies of this evidence will be retained for six years for auditing purposes.

Please provide evidence as follows:

- **In care/care leaver:** written confirmation, such as a letter or an email, of current or previous LAC status from the relevant LA (the LA that looks after them or providers their leaving care services).
- **In receipt of Income Support:** a copy of the Income Support award notice, which must evidence that the student is entitled to the benefit in their own right and confirm that the student can be in FE or training.
- **In receipt of Universal Credit:** copies of the Universal Credit Award notice from the last three months, which must evidence that the student is entitled to the benefit in their own right, as well as additional documentation to confirm their independent status e.g. a tenancy agreement in the student’s name, a child benefit receipt, children’s birth certificate or utility bills.
- **In receipt of Universal Credit/ESA and Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments:** a copy of the Universal Credit or ESA award from DWP, as well as evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment.

Section four – discretionary bursaries

This section is for students who may be eligible for a discretionary bursary – these will be allocated on different levels (1, 2 or 3) based on a student’s needs. The institution assesses applications for discretionary bursaries on a case-by-case basis and will decide how much funds should be allocated, should a student’s application be successful. Discretionary bursaries may be equal to the £1,200 available for vulnerable groups if a student requires this level of funding.

Household income will be considered alongside the other factors in this section to determine whether a L1, L2 or L3 bursary may be awarded.

Please provide a tick below if any of the following criteria apply. If you tick ‘Yes’ to any of the below, please proceed to **section five**.

Household income and circumstances		
Do you live with only one parent?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have a dependant sibling?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you a young carer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you a parent?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you entitled to FSM?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

L1 discretionary bursary	Is the total household income equal to, or less than, £16,190?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
L2 discretionary bursary	Is the total household income more than £16,190 but less than £25,000?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
L3 discretionary bursary	Is the total household income more than £25,000 but less than £29,000?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Travel and course information			
Do you live 8 or more miles away from the institution?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Section 5 – funding needs

Please fill out the table below to outline how much funding you require to cover each cost and the length of time you require the funding for, e.g. six months of transport. The institution will use the information provided in this section alongside the information outlined in section four to determine whether your application is successful.

Funding needs		
	How much will you need per day? (£)	How long for?
Transport:		
Books and equipment:		
Uniform:		
Educational trips:		
Other (please specify):		

Section six – bank details

Please complete the table below with details of your bank account – this should be your own bank account, not the bank account of a parent/carer. Payments can only be made to joint

accounts where the student is the named account holder. **You must attach a current account statement to this form as evidence if you are a joint account holder.**

Students and parents/carers should note that, should an application be successful, the institution will make in-kind payments wherever possible, such as travel vouchers, books and equipment. Payments made directly to bank accounts will only be made where in-kind payments are not possible.

Bank or building society details	
Name of branch:	
Address of branch:	
Name of account holder:	
Account number:	
Sort code:	

Section six – important information

Dates for submitting applications

All applications for the bursary should be submitted by the 31st July to correctly and fairly assess overall demands and distribute discretionary awards.

We do understand, however, that some needs may arise throughout the academic year. We do not implement a cut-off date for any application, so we can ensure students' needs can be met during the academic year. Wherever possible, however, applications should be submitted by the date outlined above so that funds can be distributed at the beginning of the next academic year.

Meeting attendance and behaviour expectations

For an application to be successful, all students must meet the agreed standards for attendance and behaviour set by the Trust. Students must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and Behavioural Policy and have a minimum attendance rate of 95% at timetabled lessons to continue to be eligible for a bursary.

If absences are authorised, this will not affect a student's eligibility for the bursary. Holidays and unauthorised absences are not permitted during school time and will affect their eligibility.

Students and parents/carers should be aware of the impact that poor attendance and behaviour may have on eligibility for a bursary. Where there are concerns regarding attendance or behaviour, the Trust may withhold further payments of the bursary. The Trust will also stop payments where a student has been absent for a period of four consecutive weeks or more, excluding holidays or if the student intends to return.

Before withholding any payments, the institution will consider the effect that this may have on students' individual circumstances.

Providing false information

Students and parents/carers must be aware that any evidence provided to support this application must be valid. Where false information is supplied, the institution has the right to investigate this. The institution will stop further payments and may attempt to recover any past payments where it is apparent that supplied information is misleading or fraudulent.

If significant fraud is identified, the institution will report this to the ESFA and may also report it to the police. This involves the following:

- The amount of money is in excess of £1,200.
- The particulars of the fraud are novel, unusual, systematic or complex.
- There is likely to be great public interest due to the nature of the fraud or the people involved.

Maintaining confidentiality

Any information given to the Trust will **only** be used for the purpose of processing your application for a 16-19 bursary. Your information, eligibility or application (whether successful or not) **will not** be shared with other students or staff members. Where we deem it necessary to share this information, we will only do this with your **consent**, unless the law permits us to do so. We understand the need for maintaining confidentiality and appreciate that applications for the bursary are sensitive.

The Trust has the duty to protect public funds that are handled by the school. The information provided in this form may be used to prevent and detect fraud. For the same reason, the information provided may be shared with third party organisations who handle public money. You will be informed if your information is being shared in accordance with the GDPR. The information will be held in accordance with storage requirements defined by the GDPR and will be held for as long as necessary.

Section seven – declaration

I confirm that the information provided in this application is accurate and correct. I understand that any incorrect information provided will lead to the rejection of the 16-19 bursary application. If any information presented in the form changes, I will inform the school immediately to ensure funding is allocated correctly.

Name (student): Signed: Date:

Name (parent/carer): Signed: Date:

For office use only

Fill in the table as applicable and use the eligibility checklist to outline whether sufficient evidence (where necessary) has been received to support the student’s application.

For office use only		
Date received:		
Completed by (name):		
Date of bursary review:		
Has the student’s application been accepted or declined?		
Which bursary has been approved?		
Reason for application being accepted/declined:		
Is evidence present?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Eligibility checklist		
Vulnerable bursaries only		
In care/care leaver		
Written confirmation of current or previous LAC status from relevant LA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
In receipt of Income Support		
Copy of Income Support award notice – this includes evidence that the student is entitled to the benefit in their own right and confirms that the student can be in FE or training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

In receipt of Universal Credit	
Copies of the Universal Credit Award notice from the last three months – this includes evidence that the student is entitled to the benefit in their own right.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirmation of the student’s independent status e.g. a tenancy agreement in the student’s name, a child benefit receipt, children’s birth certificate or utility bills.	<input type="checkbox"/>
In receipt of Universal Credit/ESA and Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments	
A copy of the Universal Credit or ESA award from DWP.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discretionary bursaries only	
Household income and circumstances	
Evidence of household income at either L1, L2 or L3.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of living in a single-parent family.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of having a dependant sibling.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of being a young carer.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of being a parent.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of being in receipt of FSM.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel and course information	
Evidence of living eight or more miles away from the institution.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 2

16-19 bursary fund statement

At QEGSMAT (the Trust) we provide 16-19 bursaries for students to ensure they have access to their studies, where they would otherwise be unable to do so for financial reasons. We are committed to closing the attainment gap between students from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, ensuring that every student participates in, and benefits from, a place in 16-19 education and training.

There are two types of bursaries available: discretionary and vulnerable. Each bursary is allocated based on students meeting the eligibility criteria. The government sets out specific criteria for the vulnerable bursary which entitles students to the funding, whilst the eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursary is determined by the Trust. In **both** cases, the school is responsible for determining whether a student's application has been successful.

We are dedicated to:

- Distributing 16-19 bursaries via a fair and equal process that is transparent, accountable and easily understood.
- Ensuring that information regarding the application, award and administration of 16-19 bursaries is available to all.
- Widening access to, and participation in, sixth form education.
- Ensuring all students who are eligible for funding have access to it.

Eligibility

Students who are aged 16 or over and under 19 years old on the 31st August 2020 will qualify for bursaries. Students aged under 16 will only receive bursaries in exceptional circumstances.

Students aged 19 or over are **not** eligible for the **vulnerable groups' bursary**, although the school may decide the student is eligible for a discretionary bursary.

Where a student's circumstances change, they can apply more than once. In this case, the student will be reassessed, including a one-to-one interview to determine if there are any exceptional circumstances to consider.

All students will be assessed individually for either bursary. Evidence must be provided to support applications – a full list of supporting evidence is outlined in our 16-19 bursary application form.

Vulnerable bursaries

To be eligible for a vulnerable bursary, students must meet one of the following criteria:

- The student is in care.
- The student is a care leaver.

- The student receives Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and/or someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner.
- The student receives Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right.

Any student who meets these criteria can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200. This may be reduced where the school deems it appropriate to do so, for example, if a student is undertaking a part-time course. Alternatively, we may decide to allocate more than £1,200 if a student needs extra help to remain in education.

The Trust are responsible for determining whether a student is eligible for a vulnerable bursary. If a student meets the above criteria, but we believe a bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support, we may decide not to distribute a bursary to this student. This may include, for example, where:

- A student attends a specialist residential provision that covers their education costs in full.
- A student undertakes a distance learning programme and there are no financial barriers to participation e.g. no travel or food costs.
- A student is in LA care and education costs are covered in full by the LA.
- A student is financially supported by their partner.

Discretionary bursaries

The Trust allocate discretionary bursaries based on those who are most in need of financial support. Discretionary bursaries may be awarded up to a value of £1,200. Our eligibility criteria for a discretionary bursary includes the following:

- Students living in a low-income household (outlined below).
- Students who are from a single-parent family or have one or more dependent siblings in their family.
- Students who have additional responsibilities, such as being a young carer or parent.
- Students who travel greater than eight miles to the institution.

Discretionary bursaries may be awarded for students from low-income households. The amount awarded will be dependent on the amount of income, relevant to the following levels:

Level	Minimum	Maximum
L1	£0	£16,190
L2	£16,190	£25,000
L3	£25,000	£29,000

Applying for a bursary

Students must complete the application form and provide the necessary supporting documentation. All applications should be submitted by the 31st July of each academic year.

The Trust do understand, however, that needs may arise throughout the academic year. As such, we do not implement a cut-off date for applications, but wherever possible, all should be submitted by the 31st July.

Conditions for receiving the bursary

All students must meet the agreed standards set by us to be eligible for the funds – these are explained to all students during the application process. Students must continue to meet these criteria after receiving the bursary. We may withhold payments where students breach these conditions.

The conditions are as follows:

- Students must have 95% attendance at timetabled lessons, unless the absence is authorised.
- Students that are absent due to sickness must present a note from a qualified medical practitioner if their absence is longer than three days.
- Students must abide by the Trust's Behavioural Policy.

Payments will be stopped where:

- A student is absent for a period of four continuous weeks or more, excluding holidays or if there is evidence that they don't intend to return.
- A student withdraws themselves from a study programme.
- Money is not being spent for the reasons it was awarded.
- A student breaches any of the conditions for payment.

Paying the bursary

Funds will be allocated in-kind rather than in cash, e.g. travel passes, vouchers/credits for required books or equipment.

Where this isn't possible, BACS payments to cover agreed costs will be made into a student's bank account.

Bursary funds will not be given to students in large lump sums. A percentage of funding will be kept back as hardship funding to respond to any emergencies throughout the year.

Using the bursary

Upon receiving a bursary, students will receive help based on their areas of need. An interview will be offered with a financial support advisor to determine the best way to allocate their support.

The following priority areas will be addressed first:

- Travel to college e.g. bus passes and travel cards.
- Equipment costs e.g. books, stationery.
- Uniform/clothing required.
- Support with the cost of educational visits.
- Any other educational support e.g. attendance at university open days and interviews.

Students will be allocated a higher amount of funding at the beginning of their course to address the priority areas.

Appeals process

If students disagree with the outcome of their application, or where payment has been withheld due to not meeting the outlined conditions, they should follow the Trust's complaints procedure, detailed in our Complaints policy – this is available on the QEGSMAT website.

Further information

More information on the use and allocation of 16-19 bursaries can be found in our 16-19 Bursary Fund policy, available on the Trust and school website.