



Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific criteria for additional 16 to 19 Bursary Funding to support students requiring financial support to participate in online learning

16 to 19 providers with a Bursary Fund allocation will be able to submit a business case to ESFA to apply for additional funding, where appropriate, for devices and/or internet connectivity. ESFA will not support the purchase of additional devices for households with existing connectivity and availability of devices that enable students to access online education.

The [16 to 19 Bursary guidance](#) still applies. The amount of additional funding available is limited and must be targeted directly where this is needed. For example to students in households that do not have existing connectivity and/or who cannot access a device to enable them to learn online, who need this for their course, and can't afford to put these in place from their own resources. Providers are best placed to determine the needs of each student.

If students are coming to the end of a course and won't be doing any more learning, then it may not make sense to provide them with this support, but providers are best placed to assess and determine needs of individual students, in line with Bursary Fund guidance.

Local authorities will receive devices for children and young people who have a social worker or are care leavers. 16 to 19 education providers should work with those bodies to ensure that any students in these categories can access education, and to ensure support for them is appropriately coordinated.

For students aged [14 to 16, further education colleges and sixth-form colleges](#) are able to enrol and receive funding from the ESFA. The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide is clear that any 14 to 16 year olds at these providers are not in scope for Bursary Fund support.

However, as an exception to normal rules, further education colleges and sixth-form colleges may include disadvantaged 14 to 16 year olds in their business case. The 3 criteria must be applied in full to these students. The current Bursary Fund rules otherwise continue to apply, with 14 to 16 year olds not otherwise eligible for Bursary Fund support.

The Bursary Fund, including any extra funding via this new mechanism, is to help young people with the costs of taking part in education when they would not otherwise be able to afford to do so. This could include additional requirements for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Where that is the case, then such requirements can be included in the provider's Bursary Fund business case, assuming the 3 criteria are met.

ESFA will review business cases presented, to assess whether they are reasonable and where any clear and obvious deviation from the norm is identified will discuss the reasons for that with the provider. The template provided enables providers to explain their needs.

Please note ESFA cannot accept business cases, other than from individual institutions, so e.g. a Trust cannot submit an application on behalf of several schools. In relation to holding of evidence, normal Bursary Fund rules should be applied.

Submitting a business case

To submit a business case, providers must complete a template and provide evidence that as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) they have insufficient funds to support disadvantaged students and provide short narrative to explain the numbers of students and the support required.

The following 3 criteria apply:

1. Support is to enable the most disadvantaged students to continue to participate in learning which has now moved to online delivery. For example, students who do not have internet at home, and/or do not have a laptop, who need these for their course, and where these cannot be afforded from household funds. This might be by purchasing a suitable device such as a laptop or tablet and/or making monthly payments to support internet use at home for more vulnerable students.
2. Support has been assessed and determined for individual students, in line with Bursary Fund rules that all support must be based on individual circumstances and needs. In accordance with Bursary Fund rules, issuing equipment to a group of students without considering their needs is not permissible, nor are flat rate payments to all students.
3. To help ensure value for money from this scheme, providers must confirm before purchasing a device that they have (i) fully deployed any existing devices previously issued to students as well as any unused institution-owned devices (these devices should not be charged to the Bursary Fund or included in the provider's business case); and (ii) explored the possibility of accessing low cost second hand or recycled devices.

For the business case to be considered, providers must provide data to show:

- amount of Bursary Fund and/or free meals funding carried forward from previous years
- amount of funding already spent in the 2019 to 2020 academic year
- amount of funding already irrevocably committed but not yet spent
- amount of funding available to support disadvantaged students, in line with the criteria above
- number of students assessed as requiring additional support
- support and funding the provider has assessed is required to support the needs of individual students, in line with the criteria above.

Business cases should be submitted via the [ESFA online enquiry form](#).