

16-19 Bursary Fund – Changes to Vulnerable Student Payments

The Education Funding Agency is making changes to the administration of the 16-19 Bursary Fund in the 2013/14 academic year, as set out in our e-bulletin of 24 January 2013.

The vulnerable student element of the 16-19 Bursary Fund will no longer be allocated to institutions. Instead institutions will need to report vulnerable students to the Learner Support Service (LSS) who will then release funds to institutions. There will be no changes to the Discretionary element of the Bursary Fund, institutions will continue to receive an allocation and should administer these funds in the usual way

Separating the vulnerable and discretionary Bursary Fund payments will make the scheme easier for institutions to administer by removing the need to manage separate demands for funding from one allocation.

Institutions should request funds by completing and submitting *the 16-19 Bursary Fund Vulnerable Students 2013/14 Funding Claim Form* to the LSS. This form will be available to download from the DfE website at the **end of June 2013**. The link to the form will be provided in an E-Bulletin at that time.

Who should complete a 16-19 Bursary Fund Vulnerable Students 2013/14 Funding Claim Form?

- Institutions that receive post-16 funding direct from the EFA or Skills Funding Agency and have an allocation for discretionary bursaries for 2013/14 i.e. colleges, academies, training providers and local authorities in respect of their own learning provision should submit the funding claim form directly to the LSS.
- Institutions that are maintained by a local authority and receive post-16 funding via the LA e.g. school sixth forms, and who have an allocation for discretionary bursaries for 2013/14 should submit the funding claim form directly to the LSS. They should send a copy of the form to their LA for information.
- Institutions that are not maintained by a local authority but whose 16-19 Bursary Fund is paid to them via the LA i.e. institutions that appear on a local authority's Annex C, should complete the form in part and forward it to their LA who should complete the final part of the form and submit it to the LSS. The LSS will only accept funding claims from the LA in respect of these institutions – any forms received directly from these institutions will not be processed and LSS will contact the institution to advise them to route their form via the LA.

How do I complete the Funding Claim Form?

Full guidance notes are provided with the funding claim form. **Institutions must read this guidance fully before completing the claim form.** Any funding claim forms that are incorrectly completed will be queried by the LSS and this may delay the release of funds to the institution.

The funding claim form must only be used to request funds for students who have enrolled with the institution for the 2013/14 academic year and whom the institution has fully assessed as a defined vulnerable student (the categories are set out in the *16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2013/14*). Up to 25 students may be claimed for on one form.

Institutions are not restricted in how many funding claim forms they submit nor the frequency with which claims are submitted. Institutions should expect to receive confirmation of payment from the LSS within two weeks of submission. Payments will begin to be released from the first week of September forms submitted before this date will be processed but payments held until that point.

Payments will be made to the bank account details previously supplied by institutions to the EFA; these account details will be transferred by the EFA to the LSS in order for them to make vulnerable student bursary payments. Payments will be accompanied by a remittance advice. The LSS will release the full amount of funding for each student to institutions who then should make payments, in kind or in cash as required, to the identified vulnerable student in line with normal institution practice.

Important points to note:

No personal data should be provided on any student. Institutions must identify vulnerable students by a unique ID that can only be connected to an individual by the institution. The funding claim form guidance gives examples of these.

If institutions attempt to claim a greater amount of funding per student than is permitted, i.e.: a maximum of £1,200 for a full bursary and a maximum of £40 per week for a pro rata bursary, the form will default to the maximum amount of £1,200. Institutions may choose to supplement this from their discretionary bursary allocation or from their own funds.

All defined vulnerable group students at an institution should be reported on the form. This includes identified vulnerable students who do not require financial support because all their needs are already catered for, i.e. a young person attending specialist residential provision where all costs are covered.

Where a defined vulnerable group student leaves their course early leaving funds available at the institution, these should be used to support any new vulnerable students that are identified. The new students should be reported on the form in the usual way but any funds already available should be entered in the 'Recycled funding' column; these will then be offset against the total by the LSS. For example, if a student is eligible for a full £1,200 bursary and the institution has £500 left from another vulnerable student who has left, £500 should be entered on the form; the LSS will then pay £700 to top up these funds to the £1,200 total.

If you have any queries about the content of this message e-mail us at:
1619bursaryfund.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk