

Apprenticeship Care Leavers' Bursary (ACL) 2026-27

The College is able to offer apprentices who start their apprenticeships up to and including 31 July 2026, the ACL bursary payment of £1,000. For apprentices starting their apprenticeship on or after 1 August 2026, the ACL bursary will be £3,000, which is payable in instalments over the first year of the apprenticeship.

This bursary is for eligible apprentices who are in care or are care leavers and will help remove financial barriers to accessing and completing apprenticeships.

The ACL bursary can only be received once by an individual care leaver, once they have been on the apprenticeship for at least 60 days.

Eligible apprentices

For an apprentice to be eligible for the care leavers' bursary, they must be aged under 25 at the time they start their apprenticeship and not have received the care leavers' bursary before. They must be either an eligible child, a relevant child, or a former relevant child.

Young people should speak to their local authority personal adviser (PA) or social worker for professional advice and information about their leaving care status.

The website of the children's rights organisation Coram Voice has an 'Am I a care leaver?' quiz that can help young people understand their leaving care status and the support they should be eligible for

<https://coramvoice.org.uk/myrights/all-you-need-to-know-about-leaving-care/i-am%20care-leaver/>

Eligible child

This is a young person aged 16 or 17 years, who has been looked after by a UK local authority or health and social care trust for at least a period of 13 weeks since the age of 14 and is still looked after by a UK local authority or health and social care trust.

Relevant child

This is a young person aged 16 or 17 years, who has left care within the UK after their 16th birthday but was an eligible child before leaving care.

Former relevant child

This is a young person under 25 who was either an eligible or a relevant child before turning 18.

The term 'in care' refers to children:

- looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or

- under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989).
- Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.

A 'care leaver' is defined as:

- a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16 or
- a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16.

Below is the type of evidence required with an application for the ACL Bursary:

Status	Evidence required	Bursary
In care Care leaver	Written confirmation of your current or previous looked after status from the relevant local authority – must be on corporate letterheaded paper and signed or sent by email from the local authority. Or Copy of benefit award notice (e.g., DWP letter or Universal Credit statements) and additional documentation to confirm independent status e.g., tenancy agreement, child benefit letter – must be in the student's name and address.	£1,000 up to 31 July 2025 £3,000 from 1 August 2025

Evidence: **documents provided must be for the apprentice, at their home address.**

Care Leaver Covenant

You can also find out about career and employment development opportunities on the Care Leaver Covenant website – mycovenant.org.uk

Not eligible

- 16-18 classed as 'overseas' students
- 16-18 and enrolled on a HE qualification
- 16-18 and enrolled on an apprenticeship or T Levels
- 19+ or over are not eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary
- 19+ continuer or 19+ and have an EHCP are not eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary.

More information

For further information and how to apply, please visit www.copc.ac.uk/financial-support or contact the Bursary Team.

Telephone: **023 9421 1980** or Email:

bursary@copc.ac.uk