



Free College Meals

Guidance Notes for Applicants 2024/2025

Students may apply for a Free College Meal. Students who received a free school meal in Year 11 should tick the box on the online application via this link <https://sjdc.paymystudent.com/portal/>. Students who already received free meals on or after 1st April 2018 will continue to be eligible for free meals up until March 2025 and then until the end of their phase of education. Evidence of entitlement may be required such as a copy of a previous entitlement letter or an email from the student's high school confirming receipt of free school meals.

The rules for eligibility for a Free College Meal have been set out by the Government and are different from those for the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary. It is likely that if you are eligible for Free College Meals you will also be eligible for a 16-19 Discretionary Bursary. Eligibility for the Bursary will be assessed separately from that for Free College Meals. Eligibility for a Discretionary Bursary is dependent on your parents' or carers' total household taxable income. Eligibility for Free College Meals will be assessed based on you or your parent/s or carer/s providing evidence of receipt of certain state benefits specified below or if you can provide evidence of entitlement to free school meals in Year 11 at your previous school.

The same online application is used to apply for Free College Meals and the 16 – 19 Bursary.

The value of a Free College Meal for 2024/2025 will be £4.00 per day and a meal deal is available from the cafeteria for this price. You may also receive this allowance if you are off site, attending a work placement or on work experience.

To be eligible for Free College Meals, you or your parent/s must be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of the State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (**provided they are not entitled to Working Tax credit**) and have annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit. Working Tax Credit is not a qualifying benefit for Free College Meals
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

How do I apply ?

You should complete the online application that is used for both the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary and Free College Meals using the same link <https://sjdc.paymystudent.com/portal/> or through the College website. If you have any difficulties with the application, please contact Jane Richardson on 01606 810040 who can help.

How will the system be administered?

We currently use a token system, so if you qualify for Free College Meals you will be given tokens with a value of £4.00. (Similar tokens are used throughout the College for student rewards and college visitors). You can use these in the cafeteria to pay for a meal deal at this price or you can pay the difference in cash if you wish to buy a meal that exceeds the £4.00 value of the token.

Further information can be obtained by emailing bursary@sjd.ac.uk or by contacting Jane Richardson or any member of the Finance Department. Details can also be found on the College website <https://www.sjd.ac.uk/student-support/financial-support/>