

Discretionary Fund Procedures 24-25

Part-Time Undergraduate and Postgraduate

The purpose of the Discretionary Fund is to provide additional financial support to eligible students who will face additional expenses as a direct result of their studies, that might cause financial hardship and prevent engagement in studies. This considers cost of books/course materials, travel and childcare. The fund is unable to support the general living expenses of students.

This guidance covers who can apply, what you can apply for, how you apply and how the application is assessed.

Who can apply –

1. Applicants must be UK domiciled, enrolled for the current session and attending a part-time undergraduate or taught* postgraduate course/module. In addition, applicants must be funding their studies through the SAAS Part Time Fee Grant, SAAS Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan Scheme, or have an annual income of less than £25k.
2. International or EU students are **not** eligible and should not apply.
3. Applicants must also meet any further eligibility conditions stipulated in the SAAS guidelines for the current academic year.

*Taught refers to there being teaching time, which can be in person or online. Assessment Only, research-based modules, or those which are self-led, are not eligible to be considered for this funding. In addition, we cannot consider resits/repeats of modules for this funding.

What you can apply for –

4. Funds are awarded on a first come, first served basis and we encourage all students to apply early to avoid disappointment. The fund will close, often with little or no notice, when the budget has been exhausted.
5. You cannot apply retrospectively, for any module that has ended.
6. You cannot apply for modules that you are resitting.
7. Students can apply for support meeting the costs of books/course materials, travel and childcare only. Any support will be a contribution only.
8. A flat rate is applied for the contribution towards books/course materials and travel. Students are free to use this contribution flexibly to best support individual circumstances. Some students may prefer to use more of the contribution to purchase books/course materials, while others may prefer to use the majority to cover travel expenses.

9. We encourage students to interpret the definition of books/course materials broadly. You may choose to put the award towards the purchase of textbooks, stationary, a printer, ink cartridges, IT equipment, etc.
10. There will be no requirement for students to provide evidence showing how they spend their award.
11. A flat rate of £150 per 20 credit module will be awarded for books/course materials and travel. This will be adjusted proportionally for modules that are not 20 credits.
12. Awards for childcare costs will be considered for all taught aspects of the module and can include on-campus teaching and virtual engagement. Reasonable registered or unregistered childcare costs will be considered, at the discretion of the Funding and Advice Team.
13. We will not consider any costs associated with a parent or step-parent providing care for a child.
14. To be eligible to apply for support meeting the costs of childcare, applicants must be in receipt of Tax Credits or Universal Credits. A copy of all pages of the current Tax Credits Awards Notice, or Universal Credit statement, will be required to prove this. This does not affect the right to apply for help meeting the cost of travel and books/course materials.
15. Applicants can claim 1 day registered childcare per 20 credit module per week, for a maximum of 15 weeks per term.
16. Unregistered childcare costs will be considered subject to a maximum contribution of £10 per 20 credit module per week, for a maximum of 15 weeks per term.
17. Benefit rules prevent us from contributing towards general living expenses, childcare costs that are not directly related to studies, and childcare costs that are being/should be met through an alternative source, such as funded childcare hours through the Scottish Government's scheme.

How you apply –

18. The fund opens at the start of the new academic session each year. Applications and guidance will be available to download from our [website](#).
19. Applicants should complete one application in respect of their studies for the full academic year. Students choosing to enrol on a further module after an original application has been processed do not need to submit a further application. Applicants should email the Funding & Advice team at fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk, advising of the additional module(s) and attendance requirements. This email should be received at the start of your studies to avoid disappointment.
20. Applicants should complete all relevant sections of the application and collate the required supporting evidence. Guidance notes for completing the application can be obtained via [the website](#).
21. When also applying for support with childcare costs, the additional Childcare Form should be completed by the student's childcare provider. This is also available via the website and applies to both registered and unregistered childcare arrangements.
22. If applicants have a quick question about any aspect of the fund procedures or the application, the best way to contact us is via fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk where we can respond quickly.
23. Applicants should ensure that the information provided is accurate.

24. A percentage of random checks may be carried out on awards for audit purposes. Any fraudulent claims will be reported to the relevant authorities and may result in disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the University Code of Discipline.

Submitting your application –

25. We operate a paper free application process. You should only submit your application and supporting evidence by email to fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk. We have a lot of guidance to help you complete your application electronically, collate supporting evidence and submit these to us.
26. It is important you read all instructions and complete the form correctly as incomplete applications may be returned and will be subject to delay.
27. If you have read all the guidance and have any concern about completing/submitting the application and supporting evidence as instructed, please do contact us at fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk and we will be happy to help.

How the application is assessed –

28. Applications join a queue based on the date they were received. We work through this queue in order, ensuring those who have applied first are assessed first.
29. We assess applications as quickly as we can, but it can take around 6 weeks to get back to you, and longer at peak times or where your application was incomplete. We ask that applicants refrain from enquiring about the progress of their application until 6 weeks has passed, as this will give us the time to focus on processing.
30. A uniform method of processing is adopted across all campuses to ensure continuity and fairness of approach.
31. Your university record will be checked to confirm the modules you are enrolled on. Your award will be based on this. If you do not think this is accurate, you should discuss this with your School before applying.
32. When assessing an award, we will confirm enrolment details and will only make awards based on the modules an applicant is enrolled on, excluding those with a status of Assessment Only or where you are resitting the module.
33. When assessing an award for childcare we will limit any award for unregistered care as per point 15 and 16.

What happens next -

34. Applicants can expect to receive an email receipt confirming that we have received the application, and that this has joined our processing queue. You may receive this up to several working days after you submitted your application, but rest assured that your place in our queue will be based on when you submitted your application and not the date of your receipt.
35. All correspondence is sent to your student email address, so you should ensure you check this regularly if you are expecting to hear from us.
36. You will receive a response from your application as soon as it is assessed. Please see point 29 for more information on timescales.

37. This response may be an award notification, a request for further information if the application was incomplete, a request to attend an appointment with an adviser, or an email advising that an award is not being made and the reason for this.
38. Award notifications will state the award amount and payment pattern, which is usually termly. Awards will usually be paid via BACS. If students have difficulty with this method of payment they should tell us about this at the point of application.
39. Where an award has been made in respect of childcare costs, award notifications will also be emailed to childcare providers stating the award amount and payment pattern in respect of childcare costs. Students will be copied into this email for information. Awards will be paid via BACS directly to the childcare provider.
40. Initial payments will be made as soon as possible after processing the application, but not before enrolment is confirmed and classes commence.

What you need to do after an award has been made -

41. You must notify us as soon as possible if there is any change in circumstances. You should send such notification to fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk
42. This includes, but is not limited to, changes in your student status, including withdrawal from the course or the commencement of a period of interruption, changes to your childcare usage, and changes to your financial situation.
43. We may cancel your application and award as a result of such changes. A refund of any unused portion may also be requested.
44. You must also update us of any change in your bank details at least 10 working days before we are due to make a payment.

Confidentiality

The University retains all documents pertaining to the financial award as audit checks are performed annually to ensure awards are made appropriately. Digital records are stored in a secure system.

The privacy and confidentiality of students will be respected at all stages of the process. Anonymous statistical information is collected about expenditure of University and Student Awards Agency Funds for reporting purposes and budgetary management. Application forms and related confidential documents are destroyed as per Data Protection guidelines and will be retained for **7 years** after the current academic year.

What if I disagree with the decision about my application?

Applicants are encouraged to discuss the outcome of their application with an Adviser before making any formal request for reconsideration of the decision. In most cases a conversation like this will allow applicants to present information that was not included in the original application and which could make a difference.

If, after speaking with an Adviser, an applicant still wishes to formally query the outcome of their application, their reasons for disagreeing with the decision should be submitted in writing to the Student Advice and Development Manager within 28 days of notification of the final decision from the Adviser. This correspondence can be submitted via fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk where it will be forwarded to the Student Advice and Development Manager, who will make an initial response within 5 working days of receiving correspondence.