

UWS Childcare Fund: Policy and Procedures

(This document is an abridged version that contains all the relevant information for applicants. Should you wish to see the full policy document, you can find a reference copy at the Student Services reception)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the UWS Childcare Funds Policy is to provide financial help to students whose access to or retention within the university could be impeded by the cost of childcare.

2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 Applications are accepted from all those ineligible to receive childcare support through the Student Awards Agency for Scotland Childcare Funds.
- 2.2 Priority will be given to registered childcare costs. Applications for unregistered childcare costs must provide an explanation, in writing, outlining why they are not using a registered childcare provider.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 Applicants must meet the following criteria:
 1. Enrolled for the current session **and**
 2. Attending a full-time or part-time course (including sandwich courses, and Distance Learning and Post Graduate courses)
- 3.2 Applicants may apply for a contribution towards their childcare in any University academic year.
- 3.3 Applicants must have applied for all other sources of funding to which they are entitled, i.e. Student Loan, NHS or other Bursary, Supplementary Grants, Childcare Grant, Tax credits, any relevant Benefits, Free Early Education place from Local Authority, etc.
- 3.4 Awards are based on household income and expenditure assessments. Please refer to application procedure for further details. The highest award available to a student in any academic year is £2,500 paid in regular instalments to meet the payment profile and not in lump sums.
- 3.5 It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the University of any pertinent change in circumstances, subsequent to the award decision, which may impact on the Childcare Award, .e.g. withdrawal from course, reduced attendance, change of childcare arrangements.
- 3.6 Students have the right to query the decision but will be encouraged to informally discuss any decision with an Adviser before any formal request for reconsideration is submitted in writing to the Director of Student Services within 28 days of notification of the decision. The Director of Student Services will make an initial response within 5 working days of receiving correspondence.

4. Procedure

- 4.1 There will be two application cycles in each year. One at the start of Trimester 1 (for students starting or progressing in their course in August or September) and the other at the start of Trimester 2 (for students starting or progressing in their course in January or February), with available funds ring fenced appropriately to ensure equal access to support by all eligible students, regardless of the Trimester they begin their studies.
- 4.2 A contingency fund will be retained to ensure students extenuating or unforeseen circumstances can apply for assistance. This will form part of the overall budget and will also be within individual limits.
- 4.3 Application packs for the UWS Childcare Fund are available from all Student Funding reception points or can be downloaded from the UWS Student Funding website: www.uws.ac.uk/funds
- 4.4 Applications should be returned to the Student Services reception at your campus by the advertised closing date. Student Services staff will advise on incomplete applications, however, this may cause a delay in processing the application.
- 4.5 Applicants should complete all relevant sections of the application and enclose photocopies of all the necessary documentation. Advisers across all campuses can provide assistance completing the form if needed. Childcare providers are required to complete a section of the form to provide confirmation of cost and attendance pattern of the child/ren.
- 4.6 Applicants will be informed of the decision of their application within 14 working days of the closing date for applications (unless an incomplete application has been submitted).
- 4.7 All applications received by the closing date will be sent to a designated campus where processing will take place.
- 4.8 An initial screening of all applications will be conducted to ensure applicants meet the following criteria:
 1. Applying in the correct application cycle **and**
 2. Has all other funding in place **and**
 3. Has completed the application form accurately and correctly **and**
 4. Has provided appropriate evidence and information to substantiate any claim made in the application **and**
 5. Has shown appropriate management of money and included reasonable figures for expenditure. Unreasonable expenditure amounts will be queried by the Advisers.
- 4.9 Reasonable household income and expenditure assessments will be used to calculate any monthly excess or shortfall. All students showing a monthly excess will be ineligible to receive support as they do not show a financial need for the funding.
- 4.10 Awards will be assessed based on demand for the fund up to a maximum award of £2,500 per academic year.
- 4.11 Award notifications will be sent to students' banner email addresses and will state the award amount and payment pattern which will normally be 4 weekly.
- 4.12 An email will be sent to the Childcare Provider(s) notifying them of the award amount and payment pattern, and confirming this to be a contribution to childcare costs on behalf of the student.
- 4.13 The student must notify the University Student Funding Adviser in writing as soon as possible if there is any change in circumstances which affect their eligibility or the criteria for award, for example:

- If the student subsequently receives any financial help with childcare costs from any other source not declared on the application form
- If the student ceases to attend, withdraw, or reduce attendance on the course.

4.14 Any changes in circumstances will result in a reassessment of the award.

4.15 A percentage of random checks may be carried out on awards, for audit purposes.

4.2 Confidentiality

4.2.1 The University retains all documents pertaining to the financial award. These will be kept in a locked, secure location as audit checks are performed annually to ensure awards are made appropriately.

4.2.2 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 will be retained for 7 years after the current academic year and are destroyed as per Data Protection guidelines.

4.3 What if I disagree with the decision about my application?

4.3.1 Applicants are encouraged to discuss the outcome of their application with an Adviser before making any formal request for reconsideration of the decision.

4.3.2 If, after speaking with an Adviser, an applicant still wishes to formally query their award, their reasons for disagreeing with the decision should be submitted in writing to the Director of Student Services within 28 days of notification of the decision. The Director of Student Services will make an initial response within 5 working days of receiving correspondence.

5. Knowledge and Skills

1.1 Student Funding Team Advisers will assess applications using their knowledge of student support entitlements, the appropriate and reasonable costs of childcare and the students' prudent management of their income.

6. Impact Assessment

6.1 Policy and procedures will be made available electronically or in alternative formats if required.

6.2 Applications packs for the fund will be made available electronically or in alternative formats if required.

6.3 Advisers across all campuses can provide assistance completing the form if needed.

7. Health and Safety Implications

7.1 No Health and Safety Implications apply.

8. Appendices

Available on request