Guidance notes to help you complete your Full Time Postgraduate Discretionary and Childcare Fund Application

The Discretionary Fund:
The purpose of the Discretionary Fund is to provide additional financial support to eligible students who can demonstrate a need for this throughout their studies. Support is in the form of a non-repayable bursary and is designed to top up the student support received through Government to help meet living costs, and assist a student in being able to engage and succeed in their studies.

The Childcare Fund:
The purpose of the Childcare Fund is to provide help meeting the costs of study related childcare to eligible students who are unable to meet this cost independently. Support is in the form of a non-repayable bursary, paid directly to your childcare provider. When applying to the Childcare Fund, we will automatically assess you for the Discretionary Fund as well, meaning you don't need to apply separately.

Whether you are applying for the Discretionary Fund only, or both the Discretionary and Childcare Funds, this guidance will take you through each section of the application form and explain all you need to do in order to complete the application correctly, which speeds up the assessment process. You will also find out about all the supporting documentation you need to submit with the form.

Remember, incomplete applications will be subject to delay, so do what you can to avoid that by following this guidance.

The Application:
Applications are available online at www.uws.ac.uk/money-fees-funding/other-financial-support/discretionary-childcare-funds/ for you to print and complete. You can also pick up an application from The Hub or Student Link on your campus. The application will be pink if you collect it from The Hub or Student Link.

If you are also applying for childcare, the additional Childcare Form is required. This is also available online at the link above for you to print and ask your childcare provider to complete. You can also pick this up from The Hub or Student Link on your campus. This additional childcare form on its own is not an application to any fund. This must be submitted with the Full-time Postgraduate Discretionary Fund application.

Procedures:
We aim to have a fully transparent approach to these funds, and provide lots of information to ensure you understand what you can expect from the fund, including how to apply and how we assess your application. We encourage all applicants to read the fund procedures, available at www.uws.ac.uk/money-fees-funding/other-financial-support/discretionary-childcare-funds/
Before you get started:

☐ Read the procedures for the fund which will help explain what you are applying for and how we assess your application.

☐ Ensure you have a quiet space and enough time to complete the application. For most students, it won’t take long to complete, but the more complex your finances are, the more time it will take. If you are applying as part of a couple, you may wish to complete the application with your partner.

☐ Gather together the following items which will help you enter the correct information into the application*:
  - Student Support Award Letter – either from SAAS, Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales or Student Finance NI.
  - Recent bank statements for all your accounts showing at least 1 month of transactions (and for your partner if you are claiming as a couple/family).
  - Recent credit/store card statements for all accounts (and for your partner if you are claiming as a couple/family).
  - Tax Credits or Universal Credits Awards Notice – all pages.
  - Information about your monthly outgoings - often on your bank statements if paid by direct debit.

*You will be required to include other items of supporting evidence, depending on your circumstances. We will give advice on this in the sections below, as we take you through the application, and in the table from Page 7 of this guidance.

Submitting the Application:

If you are providing your bank details on Section 7 of the application, you must submit your original application, in person, to The Hub or Student Link on your campus. We cannot accept this by email as we require a ‘wet signature’, i.e. an original signature and not an electronic or digital copy. In the event that you cannot submit this to us in person, you can send it to us by post and can find out more here, in the introductory text at the top of this webpage.

If you are not providing your bank details on Section 7 of the application because we already have your bank details from a previous application and these are not changing, and you are therefore only signing the declaration on Section 7, you can submit your application and supporting evidence by email to fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk This does not affect your ability to submit your original application, in person, to The Hub or Student Link on your campus, or via post (you can find out more here, in the introductory text at the top of this webpage).

Throughout this guidance we will detail the supporting evidence required, and clarify the formats that we can accept, whether you are planning on submitting a paper application or an electronic one.

Contacting Us:

We are here to help, so please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about the fund, how it works, how to apply, what evidence to include or the decision that has been made.

If you have a quick question about any aspect of the fund procedures, the best way to contact us is via fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk where we can respond quickly.

If you would rather discuss an application with an Adviser, or any aspect of the fund in more detail, please book an appointment through The Hub or Student Link on your campus. You can find more details here.
Completing the Application:

Section 1 – About your household:
This is where you tell us about your personal details and living situation. Please ensure that you fill this in fully.

When telling us how many dependent children you have, you should include only those for whom you receive Child Benefit. If you have a child who still lives with you, but is no longer deemed financially dependent, include them as an adult living in the household and explain this in Section 4.

You should also use Section 4 to tell us about any other adults (other than a partner) living in your household, such as your parents.

Section 2 – About your course:
This is where you tell us about your course, year of study and campus. You must complete this in full.

Section 3 – About your childcare:
This is only applicable to those wishing to apply for support meeting the costs of childcare. If this applies to you, you will need to ask your childcare provider(s) to complete the Childcare Form. If you have more than 1 provider, that’s fine. Just submit one completed childcare form for each provider.

Before getting this form completed, you should:

☐ Read the procedures for the fund, and the Childcare Fund Factsheet for Students for details of the childcare costs we can consider. You can find these online here.

☐ Give your childcare provider(s) a copy of the Childcare Fund Factsheet for Childcare Providers, available here.

☐ Discuss your childcare needs for the full academic year with your childcare provider.

Your childcare provider should complete all sections of the form, detailing the care they will be providing for the academic year. You should remember to consider any additional care required for school holidays when university might still be in session.

An important tool for planning your childcare needs for the year is the university term dates. You can find this at https://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/supporting-your-studies/term-dates/

When your childcare provider(s) have completed the childcare form(s), you should then insert the relevant information into the table in Section 3 of your application. We will match this against the information in the childcare form, so please ensure this is accurate.

If you have unregistered childcare costs, you must book an appointment with an Adviser to discuss your application further. Ask your unregistered provider to complete the Childcare Form and bring this, and a completed application, to the appointment. We will discuss your need for unregistered childcare and, where appropriate, will endeavour to finalise your application during the appointment.
Section 4 – Supporting Statement:
This section provides you with an opportunity to tell us anything else you want us to know, or to explain any figures that may not be straightforward. You may also want to tell us how you are seeking to improve your financial situation and how you budget your money.

Section 5 – Current Finances:
This section is all about your financial situation and is very important as we need this to income assess your application. This section gives you the opportunity to show us your monthly budget for your household.

‘Household’ refers to a partner and/or financial dependents that live with you. For example:
- If you are living with your parents while studying, and are not living with a partner, we would treat you as 1 person in the household when calculating standard expenditure, and would take your financial commitments into account.
- If you live with your partner and 2 children, we count each person as part of the household, making a total of 4 when calculating standard expenditure. We then take both you and your partners’ financial commitments into account.
- If you live in a shared flat with friends, we treat you as 1 person in the household when calculating standard expenditure and would expect you to include only your share of any household bills, and your financial commitments.

If you have a more complex living arrangement and are unsure how to proceed, get in touch and we’ll be happy to advise you.

Section 5a) – Current Financial Situation:
In the Current Financial Situation section, we need you to tell us about all of your bank account balances and agreed overdraft limits. This should reflect all household (you and your partner if applicable) accounts, whether you use them or not, and evidence will be required of each.

Section 5b) – Outstanding Debts:
This is your opportunity to tell us about the money you owe to creditors (i.e. any outstanding debts), such as credit cards, catalogues, car loans etc. You should list all your creditors and tell us how much you pay them each month. You should also include accounts that are in arrears.

Should you need additional space, we have a template available at www.uws.ac.uk/money-fees-funding/other-financial-support/discretionary-childcare-funds/ called ‘Extra sheet to list additional creditors for students with multiple debts’.

You will need to provide evidence of your debts. Where the payments are the same each month (i.e. loan repayments, car finance), we need a statement from your lender confirming your payments, including when this is due to end. You must provide the most recent statement for credit cards or catalogues, where there may be new transactions, and a minimum payment might change each month.

Provide recent letters for any accounts in arrears, or with debt collection companies.

NB: Paying only the minimum monthly payment towards some debts can mean it costs more and takes longer to repay. We recommend paying a little more than the minimum and will assess your application as such, however, we will query any amounts that appear excessive and unaffordable.

If you are unable to evidence any of the debts listed, please let us know. We can still assess your application but will disregard the debt. This may not make a difference to the award you might receive, but if it does, we will let you know.
Once you work out your monthly debt repayments, you should insert the total into the expenditure table on the following page.

Section 5c) – Household income and expenditure:
Page 4 of the application provides some guidance to help you complete the income and expenditure that follows.

In the Income and Expenditure section, you will need to tell us about any income you have and your monthly expenditure. To ensure consistency, we apply standard rates to all applications. These are noted in page 4 of the application and should be adhered to at all times.

When including your income, you should follow the instructions on the form carefully. You should divide annual support by 8, or however long the course lasts if longer than a standard academic year.

We also strongly recommend you set aside some of your funding to support you throughout the summer months when you may not get student support paid into your account, but may be continuing your studies.

Any weekly income you have should be multiplied by 52, and then divided by 12 to get a monthly figure.

We will assume an income of £150 per month for students in 1st to 3rd year and £50 per month for postgraduate and those in 4th year, with the exception of single parents and/or those who are unable to work due to disability/extenuating circumstances.

Where you pay additional childcare costs in relation to employment, please ensure you include this in the expenditure figures. You should not include the cost of any study related childcare in this section as we consider this separately. If you receive any Tax Credits or Universal Credits to help you meet the cost of work related childcare, this should be included in the income section.

At this point, you should total the income and expenditure columns, and then take the expenditure total away from the income total to get a monthly excess or shortfall.

To be eligible for an award you must demonstrate a financial need by showing a monthly shortfall, however, we urge you to submit your application even if it shows an excess. We can then double check figures, and/or keep your details on file should any further funding become available in the future. We can also offer you advice on how to budget your income.

You will need to provide evidence of the income and expenditure mentioned in your application. See the table below for guidance on what we require, and the formats that are acceptable.

Section 6 – Supporting evidence:
See the table below for more detailed guidance on the evidence required, and the formats that are acceptable.

Section 7 - Payment Details, Declaration and Data Protection:
You need to provide us with your bank details so we can make any payment straight in to your account. You must complete this legibly and in block capitals so we pay the funds into the correct account, avoiding any unnecessary delays.

If your name is different to the name on your bank account, please provide evidence of this when submitting your application, e.g. marriage certificate, deed poll etc.
We cannot pay into an account that is not yours. If you would have difficulty with this method of payment, let us know and we’ll do what we can to help.

If you have received payments from us in the past, and your bank account details have not changed, we do not need you to provide these details again, but you must still sign and date the Declaration and Data Protection part of this page.

Due to data protection regulations, you must give us permission to use the information you provide to assess your application. To do this, tick the first box within the declaration. If you do not do this, we will be unable to assess your application or make an award.

We also need your permission to email you information about any funding opportunities that may be relevant to you. To do this, tick the second box within the declaration. If you do not do this, we will be unable to let you know about additional funding that we think you might be eligible for.

You must also sign and date the declaration.

**Submitting the Application in Person** is easy. Pull together your completed application and copies of supporting evidence and hand this in to The Hub or Student Link on your campus. Please note that our front line staff do not check the form so cannot advise if anything is missing.

**Submitting the Application by Email** is easy. Pull together your completed application and supporting evidence and email this to fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk from your student email account. Remember that you are sending us sensitive information/data, so take care to use secure networks. If you are uncomfortable sending this information by email, you can submit your application in person or by post.

We receive hundreds of applications. When submitting yours, it is important that you send this in a format that allows us to manage your information efficiently, and avoid any delays to the process.

- Collate your application and supporting evidence and send this to us in one single email.
- Applications and supporting evidence must be in PDF format, whether these are downloaded from online accounts or you have scanned paper based documents. Do not email us photographs of documents, screenshots from your mobile phone etc.
- If you need to turn a piece of paper into a PDF, and do not have access to a scanner, there are a number of mobile apps that can do this using your phones camera. Try Adobe Scan, Office Lens or CamScanner which are available via the App Store and Google Play.
- You should collate your PDFs into a single attachment, and give that PDF a title that includes your full name and Banner ID. There are various online tools that can help you merge multiple PDFs into a single document. Try smallpdf.com, ilovepdf.com or pdfmerge.com
Where you are submitting an application to us in person or by post, we are unable to return any of the evidence you submit. As such, you should submit copies of evidence only, and no original documents.

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<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Evidence Required</th>
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| Bank Statements                             | We require bank statements for all household accounts showing at least a full month's transactions. The statements must be full statements, and include your name, bank details and account number. These statements must not be altered in any way. We are unable to accept screenshots from a mobile banking app, or statements in an excel spreadsheet format. Acceptable formats when submitting a paper application include:  
- Copies of paper statements  
- Print outs of PDF statements from online banking via your banks desktop website, or mobile app  
- For assessment purposes, your regular income or expenditure should be highlighted and explained, please refer to our sample bank statement as an example of how to do this. Acceptable formats when submitting your application via email include:  
- A PDF statement from online banking via your banks desktop website, or mobile app  
- For assessment purposes, your regular income or expenditure should be highlighted and explained, using the Adobe comment and mark up tools. |
| Student Support                             | Include SAAS award notice ([both sides](#)) or equivalent (Student Finance England/Wales/NI – all pages)  
Download this from your online account and either print a copy to submit with a paper application, or submit the PDF if applying via email. |
| Child/ Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit | Please include a copy of your full Tax Credit or Universal Credit Award Notice for the current year, if applicable. This must include all pages. Acceptable formats when submitting a paper application include:  
- Copy of your paper award notice  
- Download your award notice from your online account and print  
Acceptable formats when submitting your application via email include:  
- Scanned PDF copy of your paper award notice  
- A PDF copy downloaded from your online account |
<p>| Child Benefit                               | Highlight on bank statement(s) |
| Child maintenance                           | Highlight on bank statement(s) and advise of frequency – let us know if this is unreliable. |
| Earnings                                    | We don’t normally need evidence of your earnings, so you should use the assumed income figures detailed on page 4 of the application. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure Cost</th>
<th>Evidence required</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage</td>
<td>Highlight on bank statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>Highlight on bank statement and provide copy of lease, relevant pages only (i.e. those showing who lives there and how much the rent is per month). Submit copies of these pages with a paper application, or submit a scanned PDF if applying via email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dig Money</td>
<td>Provide signed and dated letter from person in receipt of money. The letter should outline everything that the payment covers, e.g. food, internet access, utilities etc. See sample at <a href="http://www.uws.ac.uk/money-fees-funding/other-financial-support/discretionary-childcare-funds/">www.uws.ac.uk/money-fees-funding/other-financial-support/discretionary-childcare-funds/</a>. You should submit this document with a paper application, or submit a scanned PDF if applying via email.</td>
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<td>Council Tax</td>
<td>Highlight in bank statement and confirm, in the supporting statement of the application, if this figure includes any student exemptions or discounts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buildings/Contents Insurance</td>
<td>Highlight on bank statement if paid monthly.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>If paid annually, divide this figure by 12 for your application. Download this evidence from your online account/emails and either print a copy to submit with a paper application, or submit the PDF if applying via email.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gas Maintenance</td>
<td>Highlight on bank statement if paid monthly.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>If paid annually, divide this figure by 12 for your application. Download this evidence from your online account/emails and either print a copy to submit with a paper application, or submit the PDF if applying via email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor Bills</td>
<td>Highlight on bank statement or provide invoices that clearly indicate the period they cover. You should submit a copy of your invoices with a paper application, or submit a scanned PDF if applying via email.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gas and Electricity</td>
<td>Highlight on bank statement if paid monthly or estimate as best as possible. We would only look for further evidence if you are in arrears, or include a figure that seems unreasonable.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>If in arrears please provide further evidence. You should submit a copy of your arrears letter with a paper application, or submit a scanned PDF if applying via email.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TV Licence</strong></td>
<td>TV licence is a standard rate of £13 per month, regardless of how you choose to pay. No evidence needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Telephone/TV Package/Internet</strong></td>
<td>We cannot support full Sky/Virgin packages as this is not necessary expenditure. We only consider a maximum of £60 per month towards a reasonable package that includes broadband in the home. Highlight your costs on your bank statement. Alternatively, download your most recent statement from your online account and either print a copy to submit with a paper application, or submit the PDF if applying via email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobile Phone</strong></td>
<td>An allowance of £15 per adult in household. No evidence required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Debt Repayments</strong></td>
<td>All debts must be listed in Section 5b) of your application and evidence for each debt should be included. Where debts are a regular monthly payment, such as bank loans or car finance, we need a statement from your lender confirming your payments, including when this is due to end. You must provide the most recent statement for credit cards or catalogues, where there may be new transactions, and a minimum payment might change each month. Provide recent letters for any accounts in arrears, or with debt collection companies. Acceptable formats when submitting a paper application include: - Copies of paper statements - Print outs of PDF statements from your online account or mobile app Acceptable formats when submitting your application via email include: - A PDF statement from your online account or mobile app - A scanned PDF of your statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food/Housekeeping</strong></td>
<td>£150 per month per head in the household, we would expect this amount to cover all costs including school lunches. No evidence is required.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Car Insurance and Road Tax</strong></td>
<td>Car insurance - highlight on bank statement if paid monthly. If paid annually, divide this figure by 12 for your application. Download this evidence from your online account/emails and either print a copy to submit with a paper application, or submit the PDF if applying via email. Car road tax – divide annual bill by 12, no evidence required but this must match the DVLA standard rates. If you don’t remember, you can find this online at <a href="http://www.gov.uk/vehicle-tax-rate-tables">www.gov.uk/vehicle-tax-rate-tables</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Petrol Costs</strong></td>
<td>This represents monthly household costs not just travel to and from University. If this figure is particularly high please provide a further breakdown in section 4, however, no further evidence is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Transport Costs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Materials</strong></td>
<td>Include standard rate of £30 per month. No evidence is required.</td>
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| **Tuition Fees** | If SAAS or equivalent pays your fees please leave this blank.  
If you pay this yourself, please provide evidence of your agreed payment plan with the University, such as the payment highlighted on your bank statement. Alternatively, you may wish to include paper copies of the receipt(s) to submit with a paper application, or a scanned PDF of a receipt if applying via email. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Childcare</strong></td>
<td>Completed Childcare Forms are sufficient evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Costs</strong></td>
<td>Standard rate of £75 per head in the household - includes partners and dependent children. This is expected to cover kids’ activities, family trips, gym memberships, etc. No evidence is required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Life Insurance** | Highlight on bank statement if paid monthly.  
If paid annually, divide this figure by 12 for your application. Download this evidence from your online account/emails and either print a copy to submit with a paper application, or submit the PDF if applying via email. |
| **Other costs**   | Please list individually and provide evidence for all.                                                      |