Discretionary Fund Procedures 19-20

Part-Time Undergraduate

The purpose of the Discretionary Fund is to provide additional financial support to eligible students who face additional expenses as a direct result of their studies, in respect of the costs of books/course materials, travel and childcare.

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 course/module. In addition, applicants must be funding their studies through the SAAS Part Time Fee Grant 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.

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 when the budget becomes exhausted, often with little or no notice.

5. You cannot apply retrospectively, for any module that has ended.

6. Part-time undergraduate students can apply for support meeting the costs of books/course materials, travel and childcare only. Any support will be a contribution only.

7. A flat rate of £30 per 20 credit module may be awarded for books and course materials for eligible modules. A module is deemed ineligible for this support if the academic staff have advised us that there will be no need for students to purchase materials or books, i.e. if materials are provided, either in digital format or hard copy.

8. Maximum instances of travel and childcare that can be applied for is 15 in each Trimester. This can be applied flexibly to suit student needs.

9. Travel costs will only be considered for required travel to the campus where the modules are running. We do not consider travel costs for distance learning unless you are attending a campus to undertake an assessment.

10. Where possible, students should use public transport, although we are aware that this is not always possible and will make exceptions. We normally do not cover the costs of taxi fares unless this is required due to disability and these costs are not met through other sources of funding.
11. Travel costs for using a personal vehicle are calculated using a mileage rate in line with figures published by HM Revenue and Customs. This rate is 16p.

12. There will be no funding available to cover the costs of parking.

13. There will be no funding available where a journey could reasonably be undertaken on foot.

14. There will be no funding available for travel expenses for a weekly/monthly travel ticket that you would normally purchase for your day to day travel and are able to use to meet the cost of your study related travel.

15. Applicants will be awarded 100% of eligible travel costs as long as funding remains available.

16. Awards for childcare costs will be considered for all taught aspects of the module and required travel time either side of attendance at the necessary campus. Reasonable registered or unregistered childcare costs will be considered, at the discretion of the Funding and Advice Team.

17. We will not consider any costs associated with a parent or step-parent providing care for a child.

18. 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.

19. Unregistered childcare costs will be considered subject to a maximum contribution of £10 per 20 credit module per week.

20. Eligible applicants will be awarded 100% of eligible childcare costs as long as funding remains.


How you apply –

22. The fund opens at the start of the new academic session each year. Applications and guidance will be available to download from www.uws.ac.uk/money-fees-funding/other-financial-support/discretionary-childcare-funds/ Paper applications will be available from The Hub or Student Link on your campus.

23. Applicants should complete one application in respect of their studies for the full academic year.

24. Applicants should complete all relevant sections of the application and enclose photocopies of all the necessary documentation to prove they are eligible to apply. Guidance notes for completing the application can be obtained via the website, www.uws.ac.uk/money-fees-funding/other-financial-support/discretionary-childcare-funds/

25. When applying for support with childcare costs, the additional Childcare Form should be completed by the student’s childcare provider and submitted with the main application. This is also available via the website (www.uws.ac.uk/money-fees-funding/other-financial-support/discretionary-childcare-funds/) or from The Hub or Student Link on your campus.

26. 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.
27. Only one application should be submitted per 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.

28. Applicants should ensure that the information provided is accurate.

29. 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 –

30. If you are providing your bank details on Section 5 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.

31. 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.

32. If you are not providing your bank details on Section 5 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 5, you can submit your application and supporting evidence by email to fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk (see Guidance Notes for further information). 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 (see point 31).

33. It is important you read all instructions and complete the form correctly as incomplete applications may be returned and will be subject to delay.

### How the application is assessed –

34. 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.

35. 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.

36. A uniform method of processing is adopted across all campuses to ensure continuity and fairness of approach.

37. Your University record will be checked to confirm the modules you are enrolled on, and whether attendance is required. Your award will be based on this. If you do not think this is accurate, you should discuss this with your School before applying.

38. When assessing an award for books/course materials, 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.

39. When assessing an award for travel by personal vehicle we will confirm mileage using AA route planner.
40. When assessing an award for travel by public transport we will use the evidence you have provided to calculate your award. For example, if you submit train and bus receipts totalling £10, but quote a cost of £12 on your application, we will only be able to award the £10 which is evidenced.

41. We would not award travel expenses for a weekly/monthly travel ticket that you would normally purchase for your day to day travel and are able to use to meet the cost of your study related travel.

42. When assessing an award for childcare we will limit any award for unregistered care as per point 19.

**What happens next -**

43. 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.

44. All correspondence is sent to your University email address, so you should ensure you check this regularly if you are expecting to hear from us.

45. You will receive a response from your application as soon as it is assessed. Please see point 35 for more information on timescales.

46. 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.

47. 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.

48. 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. Awards will be paid via BACS directly to the childcare provider.

49. 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 -**

50. 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

51. 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.

52. We may cancel your application and award as a result of such changes. A refund of any unused portion may also be requested.

53. 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. Where you have submitted paper copies of documents, these will be kept in a locked, secure location. Similarly, 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 their award, their reasons for disagreeing with the decision should be submitted in writing to the Head of Student Development within 28 days of notification of the final decision from the Adviser. The Head of Student Services will make an initial response within 5 working days of receiving correspondence. Such correspondence can be submitted via fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk where it will be forwarded.