



CHILDCARE FUNDS - COVID-19

Our normal guidance for the childcare funds follows, but we wanted to reassure you of our approach to this for the new academic year in light of the current coronavirus situation.

At UWS, the childcare funds that students can apply for can be split into two distinct funds. The fund a student can apply to will then depend on the course they study and their personal circumstances. Students will be able to identify which fund they should access and receive additional guidance on doing this effectively.

In all cases, students should discuss their childcare requirements with you in advance of any paperwork being completed. They should be able to identify what they require and will be responsible for ensuring this is in line with our procedures. We do understand that it might be difficult to identify this accurately in the current climate, which is why we will be as flexible as possible and make awards based on estimates, before reviewing awards at a later point in the academic year and adjusting as appropriate.

As always, we are encouraging students to apply to the funds at their earliest opportunity. This will allow us to assess applications and ensure any award is ready to be paid as soon as possible after the new academic year begins in early October 2020.

While the current coronavirus situation might result in increased online learning for our students, we want to reassure you that this will not lead us to fund less childcare. We are more than happy to support students by considering childcare, if available, whether students are in attendance on a campus or learning virtually.

When completing the Childcare Form, we just ask that this is completed as best as you can. If your figures don't easily fit into the rows/columns we have provided, feel free to add whatever additional detail you feel will help us assess the application. Just remember that we are trying to get a sense of the costs for the full academic year. We are also asking for this to be completed and submitted electronically in light of campus locations being closed. Students will be able to ensure you have the necessary paperwork, and guidance that will help you complete this and return to the student so they can submit this to us.



Factsheet for childcare providers

What can a student apply for?

A student can apply to UWS for a contribution towards appropriate childcare costs in an academic year. Depending on our assessment criteria this contribution may only cover a small proportion of these costs, or it may well cover the full amount.

Our process

Students must apply to the appropriate fund, however it can be a number of weeks before an award decision is made. We appreciate many childcare providers give students time to arrange their funding, holding off payment requests until any award from the University is finalised. While this is appreciated, we are keen to ensure this gesture is not exploited. Please bear in mind, regardless of the level of support we might provide the student is always your customer and they remain responsible for any contract and payments they have committed to.

- **Planning Ahead** We open our funds on 1st July for the new academic year. There should be no barrier to a student applying early. This allows support to be finalised before their course start date, but no payments will be made until the student is fully enrolled and attending.
- **Childcare Form** As part of the application process, the student should discuss their childcare needs with you and ask you to fill in our **Childcare Form** with details and costs of the care to be provided. Please complete the form in full, ensuring you provide your payment details and sign to confirm accuracy. This information is how we calculate any award, so it's important this is accurate and reflects the full year.
- **As fast as we can** We will assess applications as quickly as we can. It can take us 6 weeks to work through the queue, and slightly longer at peak times, but we're always working hard to make the wait as short as possible. Applications are means tested and require evidence. Where this is missing we are unable to make a final decision, resulting in delays while a student gets us what we need.
- **When we tell you** Due to general data protection regulations, we are unable to discuss a student's application while it is in progress. We can only confirm any childcare award once a decision has been made, and will immediately email you with the details of the award.

What can a student apply for?

We have many courses here at UWS meaning students attendance may be different depending on their course and mode of study. The student should be aware of their own academic commitments, including when they start and finish their academic year, and when they are on a break from study. They should therefore advise what they are applying for.

- **Our terms** Our standard academic year is divided into 3 terms. Each term covers a 15 week teaching period. This means most of our standard full-time students can apply for a maximum of 30 weeks.
- In most cases we are unable to consider care for more than 4 days per week but some students may be on courses where we have an exception to this rule.
- The childcare form should reflect the students' full academic year.
- **Holidays** University students do not always get holidays in line with Schools and Colleges. Students should consider their individual needs when discussing their childcare requirements for their academic year, and should consider any additional care they require as a result of School holidays when the University is still in session. We are expecting students to apply once, detailing their full childcare requirements, and may not be in a position to award additional funds later in the year if they have not applied correctly.
- **Price Increases** We appreciate you may increase your prices during the academic year. If this occurs, please contact us by email. However, due to the limited nature of our funds, we cannot guarantee this additional cost can be covered by UWS and may be the responsibility of the student.
- **Change to the Plan** If plans and costs change, please let us know as soon as possible, as this could result in a reassessment of the application, or a refund.

Payments/finance arrangements

- **Remittance Advice** We will send you a remittance email as soon as a decision has been made. This details the award and payment plan. We only send this once, in advance of the first payment, so it is important you keep this for your records. Where you do not manage your own accounts, please ensure you forward this to any relevant parties, such as local authority finance departments.
- **Payment Plans** Payments will be made on a monthly basis, in advance. Where a student applies before the term starts, the first payment will be a double payment in late September. When they apply later, and where budget permits, we will still assess the application for the full academic year, which may result in a larger initial payment. Students are responsible for any childcare payments until you receive notice of any contribution from the University, thereafter they are responsible for any costs not covered by this award.
- **BACS Transactions** Unfortunately, we cannot use any reference number or code on the BACS payments, so the best way to know which student a payment is for is to match the figure received to the remittance email. Where there is more than one payment due to you on the same date, this will appear as a single transaction.
- **Refunds** Where there is a surplus on a student's account, we would appreciate a refund allowing us to assist other students. If you are in this position, please contact us directly and we can advise how refunds can be made.

Any questions about any aspect of the award, or anything you are unsure about, do not hesitate to contact us at fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk

