

Discretionary Fund Procedures 24-25

Asylum Seekers

The purpose of the Asylum Seeker Discretionary Fund is to support to eligible students with the costs of studying, where these costs might cause financial hardship and prevent engagement in studies. The purpose of the fund is limited to the cost of books/course materials, travel and childcare.

This fund cannot help with general living expenses, as this may negatively affect the support students receive from the Home Office.

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

Who can apply –

1. To be eligible, applicants must meet **all three** of the following conditions:
 - Have the status of Asylum Seeker, having claimed asylum but not yet been legally recognised as a refugee, and therefore waiting to receive a decision on an asylum claim.
 - Have held this status at the point you applied for your course at UWS.
 - Must be receiving financial support from the Home Office.
2. Applicants must be enrolled for the current session and attending a course/module at undergraduate or postgraduate level.
3. International or EU students are **not** eligible and should not apply. This includes students who applied for their studies through a student visa route, and have claimed asylum on/after entering the UK.
4. Students who have held a status of Asylum Seeker, but who have received a decision on their asylum claim and are now recognised as a refugee, are **not** eligible and should not apply. These students may be eligible for funds available to home students, and can contact fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk for further advice.
5. Applicants must also meet any further eligibility conditions stipulated in the SAAS guidelines for the current academic year.

What you can apply for –

6. Students can apply for this funding to help pay for only books/course materials, travel and childcare. Funding is likely to be only a contribution, and will not cover all of these costs.
7. The payment method will be in the form of vouchers, to be used by the student to contribute towards these study-related costs. Individual applicants' circumstances will be considered when determining the type of vouchers awarded.

8. We will make recommendations as to what the award vouchers should be used for, based on the information provided in your application. Uses might include the purchase of text books, stationery, IT equipment etc.
9. There will be no requirement for students to provide evidence showing how they spend their award. However, students may wish to retain evidence should they be asked to show this to the Home Office.
10. Applicants may apply for a contribution towards their study-related childcare costs in any University academic year. Read our [Childcare Fact Sheets](#) before applying. Full details of the childcare costs we can consider are detailed in these documents.
11. Students may use childcare for attending classes on campus and online. Students may also use childcare for tutorials, independent study, and group work. You can apply for help with all study-related childcare costs
12. We are unable to consider summer retainers or childcare costs during the summer vacation.
13. We will query any childcare costs that appear excessive or unreasonable. Regional averages will be used to determine whether costs are excessive or within the regional norm.
14. We will not consider any costs associated with a parent, step-parent, family member or friend providing care for a child.
15. We will consider the costs of registered childcare only.
16. Funds are limited and are not guaranteed until after an application has been fully assessed.
17. 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.
18. Any award is unlikely to cover study-related expenses in full and is designed to be a contribution towards these costs only.

How you apply –

19. The fund opens at the start of the new academic session each year. Applications and guidance will be available to download from our [website](#).
20. Applicants should complete one application for the full academic year.
21. Applicants should complete all relevant sections of the application and enclose the required supporting evidence. Guidance notes for completing the application can be obtained via [the website](#).
22. 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](#).
23. 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.
24. If applicants would rather discuss an application with an Adviser, or any aspect of the fund in more detail, please book an appointment through [The Hub](#).
25. Applicants should ensure that the information provided is accurate.

26. 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 –

27. We operate a paper free application process. You should only submit your application and supporting evidence by email to fundingadvice@uws.ac.uk.

28. Read the [guidance](#) to help you complete your application electronically. The guidance will also help you to add your supporting evidence, and tell you how to submit this to us.

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

30. 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 –

31. 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.

32. 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.

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

34. Your university record will be checked to confirm your enrolment status.

35. When assessing an award, we will use the evidence you submit to confirm eligibility.

36. When assessing an award for childcare we will limit any award for childcare as per point 10.

What happens next -

37. 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.

38. 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.

39. You will receive a response from your application as soon as it is assessed. Please see point 32 for more information on timescales.

40. 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.

41. Award emails will state the award amount and payment method. Due to your status as an Asylum Seeker we are unable to pay funds directly to you in the form of cash or bank transfer. Instead, we will issue vouchers.
42. Where an award is made to help with childcare costs we will email you and your Childcare Provider. The email will state the award amount and payment details. Childcare awards are paid direct to your Childcare Provider via bank transfer.
43. Awards 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 -

44. 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.
45. Changes to circumstances include, but are 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, changes to your financial situation and changes to your status as an Asylum Seeker.
46. We may cancel your application and award as a result of such changes. If any overpayment of childcare costs has occurred, we may request a refund from your childcare provider. You will then be responsible for any costs owed to your Childcare Provider.
47. Your childcare provider must update us of any change to their 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.