

## **Guidance for making an application to the Student Support Fund**

The University has a range of additional funds which you can apply to if you are having financial problems. The eligibility criteria for each fund is explained on the front of the application forms. The main fund is the Student Support Fund.

The Student Support Fund is a 'top up' to your main income. You are expected to have explored all sources of funding available to you before applying (student finance, student bank accounts, part-time work etc). If you want to check you are accessing all the support you're eligible for, please contact the Student Advisers in the first instance:

Phone 01273 642888

Email [studentadvice@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@brighton.ac.uk)

You can apply for help with rent, bills, course costs, travel, childcare costs or something unexpected. It is not intended to help pay for tuition fees but if you owe any fees, rent or library fines, any award you receive will firstly be used either to reduce this or clear in full. The remaining balance will be paid to you. All applications are means-tested and proof of income and expenditure are required.

Awards are discretionary so not all students who apply will receive a positive outcome.

For the academic year 2018/19, the maximum award will be £900. However, if you are successful with an award the amount you receive will depend upon how much your shortfall is when your income and expenditure are compared during the assessment.

It is always advisable to contact the Student Advice Service before making an application so that we can check that you are receiving all the funding/welfare benefits to which you are entitled, and to check that your application is complete.

### **Who can apply to the Student Support Fund?**

- All full and part-time undergraduates and postgraduates undertaking a designated course and
- UK students eligible to receive student finance or Postgraduate Masters Loan or
- EEA nationals eligible to receive student finance (Maintenance Loan or Postgraduate Masters Loan)

You must be fully enrolled on a course before you apply. Intermitting students can apply, but you should talk to a Student Adviser about this first.

If you are eligible to receive student finance, you must either be in receipt of your first instalment (new undergraduate students and all postgraduates) or have been fully assessed (continuing students).

You can apply once during each academic year, unless there has been a *significant* change in your personal or financial circumstances resulting in an increase in your expenditure or a decrease in your usual income.

## Making an application

There are two forms available – one for undergraduates and one for postgraduates. PGCE students should apply using the undergraduate application form.

10 easy steps:

1. Collect a form from Student Services at your campus or download and print one from the web. Click on [this link](#) to find the right form for you.
2. Fully complete **all** sections of the form.
3. Supply all of the supporting evidence – use the checklist to help you.
4. We ask for photocopies of documents as we are unable to return original copies to you.
5. Ask a Student Adviser to check your application
6. Submit your application before the deadline
7. You can scan and email completed forms and evidence to the [Funds Assessors](#). Make sure you use your University email address.
8. Alternatively, submit by hand to Student Services at any campus or by post: **Funds, University of Brighton, Manor House, Moulsecomb Place, Lewes Road, Brighton, BN2 4GA**. Remember to pay the correct postage and if possible use Recorded Delivery as we cannot be responsible for undelivered items.
9. We aim to assess applications within 28 days. However, if your application is incomplete or we need further evidence this can delay the process.
10. If you are successful with an award we will pay you directly into your bank account. **Make sure that you have entered your correct bank details on Student Central via the personal tab.**

## How you are assessed – undergraduate students

Different funds are assessed in different ways, but in all cases your income and expenditure are compared **across the academic year only**, using a standard formula. This formula loosely represents the basic DWP Benefit figures set annually by government, but additional costs are taken into account (e.g. travel, course and housing costs).

We look at your individual circumstances. For many students this will typically be a single person who receives student finance funding based upon parental income, living in a student house or Halls. For others who live with a partner and/or children we look at the whole household, so a partner's income will be taken into account.

Each application is considered on its own merits, we don't compare one application to another, but we do apply consistency.

There must be a shortfall between income and expenditure included to be successful with an award. If you are successful, the amount you will receive depends upon how much your shortfall is. For the academic year 2018/19, the maximum award is capped at £900.

Assessment periods vary depending on the type of course you are studying, and whether or not you have children, dependants or disabilities. **They reflect the same length of time that your Maintenance Loan is calculated over.** *If you are a Brighton and Sussex Medical School student please check with a member of staff how long your assessment period is as this varies depending on your year of study.*

We have a Funds Panel who make decisions on complex applications and all appeals.

## Income

The tables overleaf detail the types of income we will include in assessments depending on your circumstances. Not all students will receive financial support from family, but we will include this if you do, and for those not in receipt of the maximum maintenance loan, we may assume that your family will need to assist you financially to make your course of study viable.

We would not expect you to apply to the Fund if you have savings, but if you do have savings in excess of £1500, we may ask you to provide further details of your financial commitments or defer your application until these funds have reduced.

For single, undergraduate students without dependants or disabilities, we will also include an 'assumed income'. This is an amount of money you are expected to be able to contribute towards your living costs. It could come from part-time work, savings or an overdraft facility. However, if you *are* earning from part-time work we don't include your actual wages, even if you earn more than the assumed income (different guidance applies to postgraduate students and partners' wages). If you are unable to work due to ill health or disability and are able to provide medical evidence we can remove the assumed income figure in full or part depending on your circumstances. If you are in your final year of study, or on a 52 week course (for example nursing and paramedic practice students) we don't include an assumed income figure.

Assumed income for students in the first year of study: £1000

Assumed income for students in the second/subsequent years of study: £750

**Assumed income is not included for students in the final year of study.**

Certain types of income are disregarded from assessments. Examples include:

Care Leaver/Estranged Student Bursary

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

Carer's Allowance

Employment Support Allowance (ESA)

Child Benefit

Child maintenance payments from former partners

## **Expenditure**

As a hardship fund, only essential expenditure most students are likely to encounter will be included. We apply fixed amounts according to circumstances for general living, travel and course costs to ensure consistency and fairness (see tables overleaf).

We may be able to include other essential costs not detailed here, for example medical costs not covered by DSA, if you are able to provide evidence.

We include a fixed amount for course costs, but if you have high course costs (particularly those with final year shows/projects) and you provide a breakdown of actual costs, together with a letter from your tutor confirming this, we can include up to a maximum of £1000, depending on actual costs.

## **Care Leavers or students who are estranged from their families**

You may have seen this question on the application form or when you enrolled. This is because we want to direct particular help to students who are care experienced and/or have lost family contact, for whatever reason and however long ago. It does not matter how old you are to receive additional help from us. The package of support we have to offer you includes financial help. Please indicate on the front page of the form if you fall into this category and the Student Advice Service Manager will be in contact with you separately to arrange the most appropriate support for you.

Category of Student	Assessment periods	Income included	Expenditure Included	Maximum Amounts (Expenditure)
Single undergraduates not studying nursing or paramedic practice	39 weeks	-Maintenance Loan  -Maintenance Grant  -University Bursary  PGCE/TDA/Social Work Bursaries for students on these courses  -Financial support from family  -Assumed income (not final year students)*	-Rent  -Travel costs  -Course costs  -General living costs (food/utility bills/phone/clothing)	Capped at a maximum of £607 per month  £25 per week  £500 per year (non-final year students) £750 (final year students)**  £85 per week
Undergraduate students who have partners, dependants or disabilities <b>not</b> studying nursing or paramedic practice	43 weeks	-Maintenance Loan  -Special Support Grant  -University Bursary  PGCE/TDA/Social Work Bursaries for students on these courses  -Financial support from family  -Parent Learning Allowance  -Adult Dependent Grant  -Childcare Grant  -Partner's income  -Housing Benefit  -Child/Working Tax Credits  -Universal Credits	-Rent/Mortgage  -Travel costs  -Course costs  -General living costs (food/utility bills/phone/clothing)  -Council Tax  -Childcare costs	Actual cost (not capped)  £25 - £75 per week depending on number of dependents  £500 per year (non-final year students) £750 (final year students)  £85 per week if single/ £133 per week with partner & £100 per week with 1 child £78 per week for each additional child  Actual cost (over 43 weeks)  Actual costs (though you will need to provide evidence and are expected to be in receipt of the Childcare Grant)

Category of Student	Assessment periods	Income included	Expenditure Included	Maximum Amounts (Expenditure)
Single nursing or paramedic practice student	52 weeks	-Maintenance Loan  -NHS /Paramedic Practice Bursary	-Rent  -Travel costs	Capped at a maximum of £607 per month  £25 per week (but can be increased to a maximum of £50 per week if you have

		-University Bursary	-Course costs	additional travel for placements) £500 per year (non-final year students) £750 (final year students)
		-Financial support from family	-General living costs (food/utility bills/phone/clothing)	£85 per week
Nursing or paramedic practice student with dependents and/or disabilities	52 weeks	-Maintenance Loan  -NHS Bursary (including Parent Learning Allowance/ Adult Dependent Grant)  -Paramedic Practice Bursary  -University Bursary  -Financial support from family  -Childcare Grant  -Partner's income  -Housing Benefit  -Child/Working Tax Credits  -Universal Credits	-Rent/Mortgage  -Travel costs  -Course costs  -General living costs (food/utility bills/phone/clothing)  -Council Tax  -Childcare costs	Actual cost (not capped)  £25 - £75 per week depending on number of dependents  £500 per year (non-final year students) £750 (final year students)  £85 per week if single £133 per week with partner & £100 per week with 1 child £78 per week for each additional child  Actual cost  Actual costs (evidence will be required and you will be expected to be in receipt of the Childcare Grant)

## Postgraduates

Postgraduate students are assessed slightly differently to undergraduates. This is because most self-fund in a variety of ways. We still compare income and expenditure across the academic year, and there must still be a shortfall between them to be successful with an award. However, there is an expectation that postgraduate students must also have made adequate financial provision to undertake further study. In practice, this means that you must have almost enough income to cover living costs, tuition fees and costs associated with your course. As with undergraduates, the Student Support Fund isn't intended as a main source of income, but a potential 'top up' to main funding designed to help you complete your course.

Funding for postgraduate study may come from postgrad or career development loans, or from part-time work, or a combination of both. Your actual income is included in assessments (assumed income is not applied) but if you have a very large shortfall between your income and expenditure then your application may be unsuccessful if reasonable financial provision has not been made. The table below indicates types of income and expenditure included in postgraduate assessments.

Postgraduate students are assessed over 52 weeks of the year, and applicants must be studying a minimum of 50% of a full time course, or 25% for those with disabilities.

Category of Student	Assessment periods	Income included	Expenditure Included	Maximum Amounts
Postgraduates	52 weeks	Postgraduate/ Professional Career Development Loan  Scholarships/Bursaries  Earnings  Family contribution  Housing Benefit  Child/Working Tax Credits/Universal Credits  Partner's net income	Rent          General living costs (combined (food/utility bills/phone/clothing)       -Travel costs          -Course costs          -Council Tax          -Childcare costs	Capped at £607 per month for single students, uncapped for those with dependents or disability benefits          £85 per week if single £133 per week with partner & £100 per week with 1 child £78 per week for each additional child       £25 - £75 per week depending on whether you have dependents or commute a long distance to university       £500 per year (non-final year students) £750 (final year students)    Actual cost    Actual costs (evidence will be required)

## What Happens Next

1. When we receive your application you will receive an electronic acknowledgement from us to your **University email address** within 3 days. This email will contain important information. If you cannot access this address please contact Information Services to have this resolved: [servicedesk@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:servicedesk@brighton.ac.uk)
2. It is your responsibility to check the progress of your application. If you have not received an acknowledgement from us within 14 days of submitting the form, please contact us.
3. We aim to process applications within one month of receipt but at busy times this may take longer. If you have submitted an incomplete application your application may also be delayed beyond this. Please bear in mind that we receive a very large number of applications on or near application closure dates so it is a good idea that you submit an application well in advance of this if you are able.
4. If we are waiting for more information or we need to ask you to provide more evidence, please send this via post or your university email only. Your application will be held in confidential filing space.
5. Once we have completed your assessment we will notify you of the outcome via your university email account.

6. If you are successful with an award this will be paid directly into your bank account using the bank details you have supplied to Student Central. Payment should reach your account within 14 days of your notification. You will receive a remittance notice from the University Finance department a couple of days before the money is credited to your account. The credit should identify itself as a University of Brighton payment.
7. If you have been unsuccessful we provide you with a full explanation.

### **What to do if you are not successful**

Unfortunately not everyone will be successful with an award. We are always happy to discuss this with you, and an unsuccessful application in one year does not necessarily mean that you will be unsuccessful with applications in future years. Your circumstances may change, and single final year undergraduates are assessed slightly differently to non-final years.

There may also be things that you could do to improve your financial situation. If you would like support with budgeting your finances, please contact our advice team who can help you with this. They can also check that you are receiving the right amount of maintenance loan from Student Finance, and welfare benefits if you receive them. They can also advise on student bank accounts, and help you resolve any issues you may have accessing or receiving the correct level of statutory funding: <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/contacts/index.aspx#studentadviceservice>

The Careers Service can also provide support to help you find part-time work whilst you are studying. This includes CV writing, submitting job applications and finding part-time roles both on and off campus: <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/employability-and-careers/index.aspx>

### **How to challenge a decision**

#### **Appealing**

1. If you have received a decision and you have any queries or questions, please call the Funds Assessment Team (Student Advice Service) in the first instance: 01273 642869/01273 642520.
2. If you are in contact with one of the Student Advisers, you can contact them to discuss your assessment.
3. If you want to appeal, you need to do so in writing. Your appeal must meet specific criteria to be considered – we can't accept appeals simply on the grounds that you haven't been successful. In brief, the grounds are: i) You believe you have been incorrectly assessed, ii) There has been a change in your financial and/or personal circumstances since your original application or there is information and/or evidence related to your financial and/or personal circumstances that you did not raise when your application was submitted.

If you believe that you meet at least one of the criteria we will send you an appeal form and explain what happens next.

4. Appeals should be made within 14 days of receiving the outcome of your application.
5. The Funds Panel meets fortnightly to consider appeals. The Panel consists of Funds Assessors, a Student Services Manager, a member of Academic Services and a member of the Finance Team.
6. If one of the Advisers is supporting you with an appeal, they can advocate on your behalf at the Panel meeting.
7. The decision of the Panel is final and there is no further right of appeal.

## Submitting a complaint

1. You can make a complaint about any aspect of the assessment process, administration or customer service in the unlikely event that you are unhappy with your experience.
2. If you want to discuss any grievance in an informal manner, please contact Helen Abrahams, Student Advice Manager, by email: [h.l.abrahams@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:h.l.abrahams@brighton.ac.uk). Helen will arrange a convenient time for you to discuss this over the phone or in person.
3. Alternatively, you can make a more formal complaint in writing to: **Funds Complaints, Student Operations and Support, University of Brighton, Manor House, Moulsecoomb Place, Brighton, BN2 4GA.**
4. All complaints are treated in confidence and considered by the Student Advice Service Manager and if escalated, the Director of Student Operations and Support.

### Key contacts:

Funds Assessors: 01273 642869/01273 642520/01273 642955 or email [funds@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:funds@brighton.ac.uk)  
Student Advisers: 01273 642888 or email [studentadvice@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@brighton.ac.uk)