

Financial Support Fund: Guidance for applicants

Version: 2.9
Status: Final
Author: Marina Lopes
Date: 23/08/2024

Financial Support Fund: Guidance for applicants

<i>Financial Support Fund: Guidance for applicants</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>1.Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>2.Eligibility</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>3.Financial Support Fund procedure</i>	<i>1</i>
3.1 Description of financial contributions	1
3.1.1 The following evidence must be provided with all applications:.....	2
3.1.2 Providing the following evidence can help support your application:	2
3.1.3 What cannot be claimed for	2
<i>4.How to apply to the Financial Support Fund</i>	<i>3</i>
4.1 You must:	3
4.2 The Financial Support Fund application form will ask you to:	3
<i>5.Outcome of application</i>	<i>3</i>
5.1 Possible outcomes	4
5.1.1 Communication of outcome	4
5.1.2 Other support	4
<i>6.What if I am not happy with the outcome?</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>7.Fund Assessors</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>8.How will my personal information be dealt with?</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>9.Appendix A – decision flow chart</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Approval History</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Document History</i>	<i>7</i>

1. Introduction

UCEM understands that financial difficulties can arise at any time and can happen despite good financial planning. The Financial Support Fund has been put in place to provide short term contributions to the financial support for current registered students¹ who are facing unexpected financial difficulties which are impacting on their ability to study; particularly where funding is needed to support a student's continuation or successful completion of their studies. The Fund is intended to act as a one-off support payment rather than a regular or main source of income.

If you need any help with this procedure and/or completing the application form, please contact the Student Advice Team via [Student Central \(opens new window\)](#).

The Fund cannot provide assistance with tuition fees – flexible payment options and information on UCEM bursaries can be found on the [Bursaries and Funding \(opens new window\)](#) page of the website.

The size of the fund is limited, and we aim to provide a contribution towards your shortfall rather than covering it in full. Unfortunately, once all funds are spent for the academic year the fund will close for that academic year.

2. Eligibility

As mentioned above, any student who is currently registered to study at UCEM is eligible to apply to the Financial Support Fund.

We particularly welcome applications from students who have Additional Support Plans in place or who have a disability; we also strongly encourage those who have caring responsibilities or who are care leavers, and those students with low family income or at risk of homelessness to apply for assistance from this Fund.

Assessors will consider an applicant's financial and academic record at UCEM, including any Academic Misconduct Cases, when considering an application.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to source every possible type of funding and engage with the UCEM Student Advice Team via [Student Central \(opens new window\)](#) for advice and guidance prior to applying to this Fund.

3. Financial Support Fund procedure

3.1 Description of financial contributions

Examples of the evidence required for the application are listed below ([3.1.1](#)) including applications the assessors will not consider ([3.1.3](#)). In the case of exceptional circumstances, the Assessors will review any amounts which exceed the contributions listed in the table below.

Band	Amount	Description
Level 1	up to £450	Band 1 can be used for items such as study equipment, home broadband (for up to 3 months), or a maximum contribution of £200 towards the technology

¹ not in an interruption of studies or completed the course of study

Financial Support Fund: Guidance for applicants

		<p>deposit for Disabled Student Allowances (UK students only for this contribution).</p> <p>Examples of study equipment can include a laptop, desk and/or chair.</p> <p>Students who have already been awarded funding to purchase study equipment will not normally be eligible to apply again.</p> <p>Support is available for study equipment items bought second hand or for parts purchased to upgrade an existing computer.</p> <p>Study equipment item/s such as laptops or assessments should not be purchased before an award is confirmed.</p>
Level 2	up to £550	<p>Band 2 can fund up to 3 months' worth of either household utility bills, food, rent and/or childcare.</p> <p>Mortgage payments unfortunately cannot be claimed for.</p>
Level 3	There is no contribution limit to these applications	<p>Band 3 is for students with serious financial need. These applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. There is no contribution limit to these applications.</p>

3.1.1 The following evidence must be provided with all applications:

- Evidence of cost incurred (or to be incurred) for which application is submitted
- Description of the financial support required
- Recent bank statements for all accounts held including Joint, Savings, ISAs, Premium Bonds (3 months)

3.1.2 Providing the following evidence can help support your application:

- Wage slips for the last three months, if employed
- Confirmation of any change in employment status if appropriate
- Proof of Universal Credit
- Proof of any state financial support received in last 3 months
- Evidence of request for payment from a Disabled Student Allowance application (if applicable)

3.1.3 What cannot be claimed for

As funds are limited, UCEM cannot meet every application for support and some awards may only be able to contribute to some of the costs applied for. The Fund cannot provide funds on an ongoing and regular basis. The following are examples, but not a complete list, of applications which the Fund assessors cannot consider:

- High specification IT or gaming equipment

Financial Support Fund: Guidance for applicants

- Medical bills
- Legal fees
- Loan repayments (this includes mortgage)
- Non-essential household renovations & improvements
- Tuition fees
- Study materials such as stationery
- Tablet (such as an iPad)
- Printers
- Other family member's or friend's financial hardship
- Applications without evidence
- Compulsory module materials
- Mitigating Circumstances resubmission costs
- Graduation tickets costs
- Visa and immigration documentation

Students can apply for the Financial Support Fund twice per academic year (unless in exceptional circumstances).

4. How to apply to the Financial Support Fund

4.1 You must:

- Use the [Financial Support Fund Application Form \(opens in new window\)](#) to tell us about your request, please give as much detail as possible
- Attach valid evidence (see [3.1.1](#))
- Send it to financialsupportfund@ucem.ac.uk
- Applications may also be dictated in confidence to the Financial Support Fund Administrator: please phone Marina Lopes on (+44) 118 467 7048

4.2 The Financial Support Fund application form will ask you to:

- tell us the reason you are in financial hardship
- tell us which Band you are applying for
- tell us how much of a financial contribution you are seeking
- provide valid evidence (as stated in 3.1.1)

Evidence of your financial position to support an application is essential. Failure to supply appropriate evidence will result in your application being delayed.

Section 8 explains how the information you provide will be treated with care and confidentially in line with our [Privacy and Data Protection Policies \(opens new window\)](#).

5. Outcome of application

Financial Support Fund: Guidance for applicants

Your application will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and applicants have 20 working days to send their application and send their evidence.

The assessment is undertaken by two members of UCEM staff.

Payment for any awards is normally made within 20 working days of the assessment outcome date.

5.1 Possible outcomes

Various possible outcomes of your application are outlined below but outcomes are not limited to this list:

- Your application amount for financial help might be met in full (should amount be less than or up to the maximum contribution amount), more than the application amount (at the discretion of the assessors), or a contribution towards the amount applied for
- Your application for a financial contribution might be refused
- You might be recommended to reapply at a later date (maximum of 2 applications per academic year)
- You might be asked for more information about your financial circumstances

5.1.1 Communication of outcome

You will be contacted by the Financial Support Fund administrator by email with the assessor's decision on your application and request your bank details in order to process the payment.

5.1.2 Other support

The Fund assessors may also provide advice on further support and advice to help you, if appropriate. This can include:

- **Referral to the Disability & Welfare Team**
 - The Disability & Welfare Team can discuss what long term support may be available to support you (contact them via Student Central)
- **Referral to the Safeguarding Team**
 - The Safeguarding Team can signpost you to support organisations appropriate to your circumstances: safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk
- **Referral to the Finance Team**
 - The Finance Team can discuss flexible payment options for the payment of Programme fees if appropriate to your circumstances (contact them via Student Central)
- **SilverCloud**
 - Please visit the SilverCloud <https://ucem.silvercloudhealth.com/signup> for a course to help you to understand the relationship between money and your mental health (and more).

6. What if I am not happy with the outcome?

Financial Support Fund: Guidance for applicants

An applicant may request a review of their application if they are dissatisfied with their initial outcome. This review will be undertaken by a different member of UCEM staff and a Head of Service within the Student and Registry Services department. This review must be made within ten working days of receipt of the assessment decision by the applicant.

A request for a review of the initial decision can be made on the basis that there has been a fault or irregularity in the consideration of your application under one of the following groups:

- (i) The decision was not in accordance with the Policy; and/or
- (ii) The judgement of the assessors was affected by personal bias; and / or
- (iii) There was a material administrative error or some other material irregularity in the conduct of the assessors, such that the decision would have been materially different had the error or irregularity not occurred; and/or
- (iv) If there is new evidence available which would make a material difference to the application, so long as this evidence is then submitted with the request of review.

A request must be made within 10 working days of receipt of the assessor's decision. This will be considered within 10 working days of receipt. Requests for reviews must be submitted to the Financial Support Fund administrator using financialsupportfund@ucem.ac.uk.

If you continue to be unhappy with the outcome you can raise a Stage 2 Formal Appeal by completing and signing the Student Appeals Form, attaching any relevant evidence, not previously considered and submit it to UCEM's Appeals Officer on appeals@ucem.ac.uk.

For further information see the [Student Appeals Procedure from section 6.4](#).

7. Fund Assessors

The Fund's assessors will consider all applications for Financial Support Funding in a non-judgmental and respectful manner. Applicant's individual circumstances will be treated confidentially by assessors, unless it is considered that the student is at risk to themselves or others, whereupon the matter may be referred to the Safeguarding Team in keeping with UCEM's [Safeguarding Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).

8. How will my personal information be dealt with?

UCEM are fully committed to treating your personal details with the utmost care and in line with [Privacy and Data Protection Policies \(opens new window\)](#). This means we will treat students' personal information gathered from a Financial Support Fund application confidentially, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR).

Relevant case information will only be disclosed to UCEM staff who are processing or deciding on your request, unless you are considered at risk to yourself or to others, whereupon the matter may be referred to the Safeguarding Team in keeping with UCEM's [Safeguarding Procedure \(opens new window\)](#). If you wish the information to remain more private, i.e. known to one or two people only, then you should discuss this with the Financial Support Fund administrator before submitting.

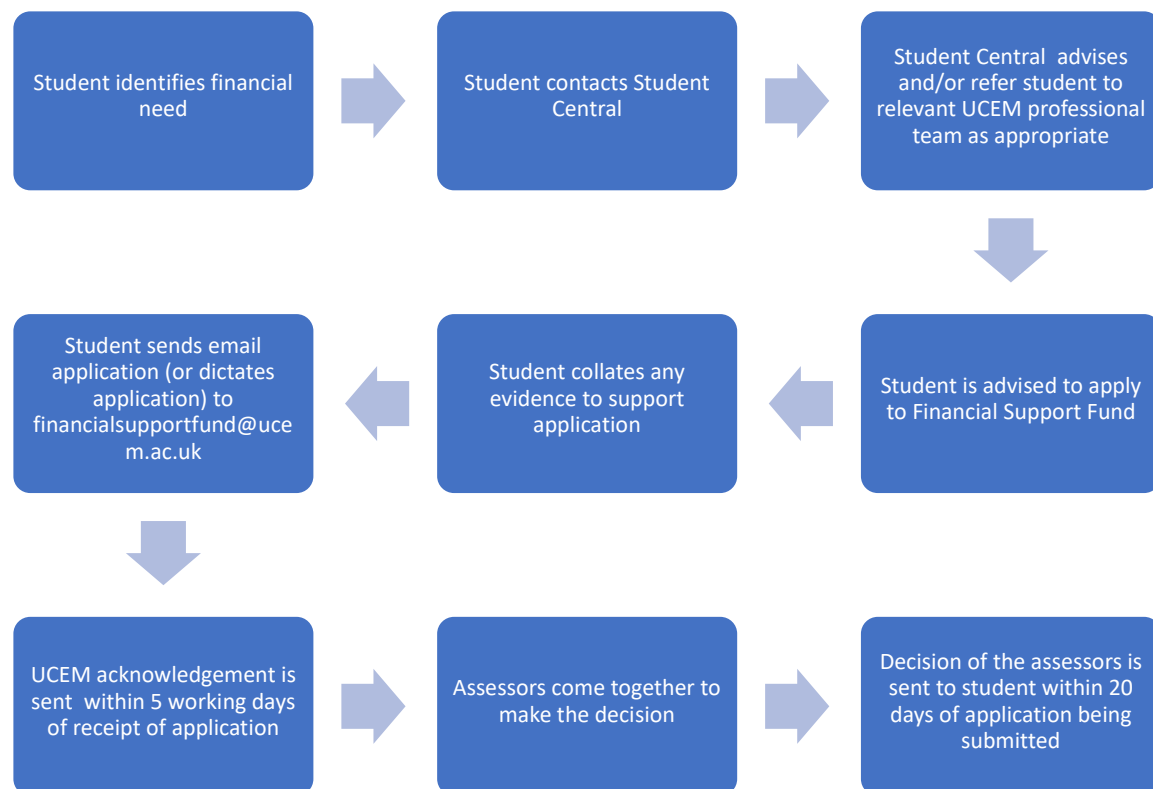
Identifiable information as part of your application (including the application form, financial information and bank statements) will be retained for two years after the outcome of your application is notified to you. UCEM will retain summary details of the Financial Support Fund applications (including a student's name, student number, amount requested and the

Financial Support Fund: Guidance for applicants

overall decision) to inform continuous improvement of process and provision, as well as UCEM's obligations and data reporting to the Office for Students.

In order to preserve the confidentiality of others, you are asked not to include personal information about third parties such as family members unless it is necessary to support your Financial Support Fund application. If you do disclose personal information about someone else this will not be recorded other than noting whether information was shared and whether it was accepted.

9. Appendix A – decision flow chart



Approval History

Version	Date	Name	Organisation
1.0	31/01/2020	Jane Fawkes	UCEM
2.1	20/05/2022	Lynne Downey	UCEM
2.3	18/08/2022	Lynne Downey	UCEM
2.5	17/01/2023	Lynne Downey	UCEM
2.7	19/10/2023	Lynne Downey	UCEM
2.9	23/08/2024	Sophie Elliott	UCEM

Document History

Version	Date	Reason	Person
1.0	11/02/2019	First draft	Nikki Bulteel
1.1	04/04/2019	Amendments recommended by D&W team and Finance Team	Nikki Bulteel
1.2	24/10/2019	Amendments required from Bursaries Working Group	Nikki Bulteel
1.3	24/01/2020	Amendments following EIA and subsequent review by AW/JEF	Nikki Bulteel
1.4	24/06/2020	Minor amendments for clarification	Nikki Bulteel
2.0	09/09/2020	Update following review	Nikki Bulteel
2.1	04/05/2022	Minor amendments for clarification	Elly Yeatman
2.2	04/08/2022	Minor amendments for clarification	Marina Lopes
2.3	17/08/2022	Amendments recommended due to changes to the Financial Support Fund Allocation	Charlotte Thackeray
2.4	12/10/2022	Minor amendments for clarification	Charlotte Thackeray
2.5	16/01/2023	Combination of Policy and procedure for students	Charlotte Thackeray
2.6	16/03/2023	Minor amendments for clarification	Charlotte Thackeray
2.7	1/9/23	Annual review of documentation and amendments including Fund name change	Charlotte Thackeray
2.8	29/04/2024	Minor amendments for clarification	Marina Lopes
2.9	8/07/2024	Amendments to reflect approved Financial Support Fund changes	Charlotte Thackeray