

Financial Support Fund: Guidance for applicants

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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 Engagement 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.

The Fund Committee (FC) 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 Engagement 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 committee will not consider ([3.1.3](#)). In the case of exceptional circumstances, the committee will review any amounts which exceed the contributions listed in the table below.

Contribution example	Description
Laptop	A maximum of £300 contribution towards a laptop.

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

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	<p>An example of the chosen laptop to be sent as part of the fund application.</p> <p>Support is available for items bought second hand or for parts purchased to upgrade an existing computer.</p> <p>Students who have already been awarded funding to purchase a laptop will not normally be eligible to apply again.</p> <p>Item should not be purchased before an award is confirmed.</p>
Emergency living costs	<p>A maximum contribution of up to £300 towards an emergency living cost within your home where there has been a sudden and unexpected cost.</p> <p>Emergency living costs include but are not limited to: emergency roof repairs and emergency boiler repairs.</p> <p>If awarded, students should provide a receipt detailing the item purchased as soon as possible after the purchase has been made.</p>
Broadband/Internet charges	<p>A maximum contribution of up to £50 towards specific broadband charges, contributions will be made for 1 month's broadband charge or bill to enable you to continue your studies.</p> <p>If awarded, students should provide a receipt detailing the item purchased as soon as possible after the purchase has been made.</p>
Childcare	<p>A maximum contribution of up to £150 towards childcare.</p> <p>Support is available for children aged up to and including 12 years (older children will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis).</p> <p>If awarded, students should provide a receipt detailing the item purchased as soon as possible after the purchase has been made.</p>
Study equipment	<p>A maximum contribution of up to £70 for a desk and £60 for a suitable study chair.</p> <p>An example of the chosen desk and/or chair to be sent as part of the application.</p> <p>Support is available for items bought second hand.</p> <p>Students who have already been awarded funding to purchase a desk and/or a chair will not normally be eligible to apply again.</p> <p>Item(s) should not be purchased before an award is confirmed.</p>
Specific Learning Difficulties – Technology Deposit for Disabled Student Allowances	<p>A maximum contribution of £200 towards the technology deposit for Disabled Student Allowances.</p> <p>This contribution is for UK students only.</p> <p>If awarded, students should provide a receipt detailing the item purchased as soon as possible after the purchase has been made.</p>
Other	<p>These applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, there is no contribution limit to these applications.</p> <p>If awarded, students should provide a receipt detailing the item purchased as soon as possible after the purchase has been made.</p>

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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 Financial Support Fund Committee cannot consider:

- High specification IT or gaming equipment
- 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

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4.1 You must:

- Use the [Financial Support Fund Application Form \(opens in new window\)](#) to tell us about your request
- Attach valid evidence (see [3.1.1](#))
- Send it to hardshipfund@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 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

Your application will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.

The FC normally meets on the first Thursday of every month. Your application will be considered at the next meeting, within 20 working days following receipt of your fully completed application and required evidence.

A payment for any awards is normally made within 20 working days of the committee meeting 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 FC), 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 Committee's decision on your application and request your bank details in order to process the payment.

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5.1.2 Other support

The Financial Support Fund Committee 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?

An applicant may make an appeal to Director of Student Services, (or nominated deputy) if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their application. This appeal must be made within ten working days of receipt of the FC's decision by the applicant. The Director of Student Services' decision is final.

An appeal on the FC's 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 FC was affected by personal bias; and / or
- (iii) There was a material administrative error or some other material irregularity in the conduct of the FC, 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 appeal.

An appeal must be made within 10 working days of receipt of the FC's decision. This will be considered by the Director of Student Services within 10 working days of receipt. Appeals must be submitted to the Financial Support Fund administrator using hardshipfund@ucem.ac.uk; this will be forwarded to the Director of Student Services.

7. Fund Committee

The Fund Committee (FC) is a sub-committee of the UCEM Bursaries Working Group, which has oversight of the FC and into which the FC reports.

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The FC usually meets monthly on the first Thursday of the month and is made up of the following UCEM staff:

Title	Role
Outreach & Inclusion Lead	Chair
Disability & Wellbeing Advisor	Ex officio
Member of Finance Team	Ex officio
Member of Learning and Teaching Enhancement Team	Ex officio
Fund administrator	Ex officio
Academic Planning Coordinator	Other panel member
Admissions Manager	Other panel member
Academic Governance Officer	Other panel member
Apprenticeship Outcomes Officer	Other panel member

For the FC to be quorate, at least 3 current (voting) members should be in attendance. This excludes the fund administrator.

The FC will consider all applications for Financial Support Funding in a non-judgmental and respectful manner. Applicant's individual circumstances will be treated confidentially by the FC members, 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.

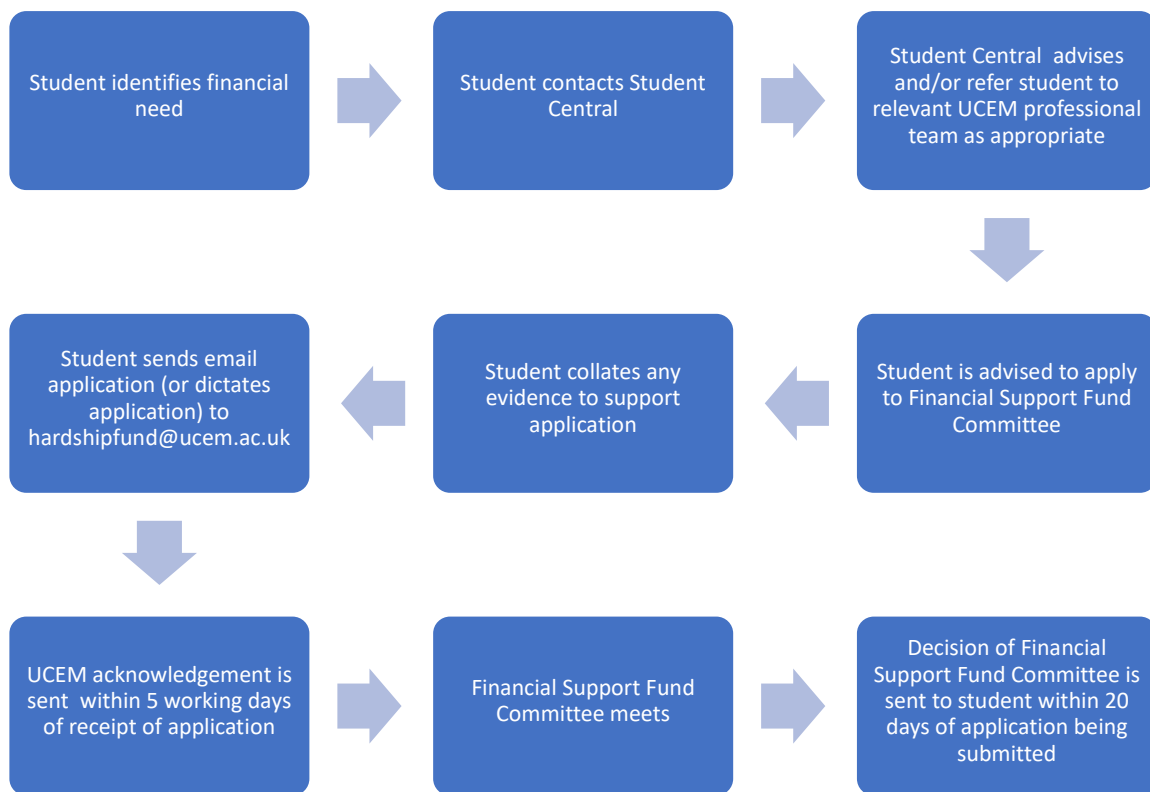
Identifiable information as part of your application (including the application form, financial information and bank statements) will be retained for two years after the outcome of your application is notified to you. UCEM will retain summary details of the Financial Support Fund applications (including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

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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

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Document History

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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