

Hardship Fund Policy Statement

The University Hardship Fund (the fund) is an emergency fund for students whose financial provision for their studies are impacted by unforeseen circumstances resulting in financial hardship.

The University are committed to the wellbeing of our students and the fund is one aspect of a holistic support package that the university provides to students in challenging circumstances.

It is a discretionary source of financial support to enable these students to complete their current course at Brunel University London.

The fund is allocated annually and is a specific and limited amount of money which the University administers to ensure that those in genuine hardship are given access to it.

The fund is not a routine supplementary source of funding and cannot be used to pay tuition fees.

The fund provides three types of financial support:

1. Main Hardship Award – to intervene in cases where a student may be forced to consider withdrawing from their course due to financial hardship, normally a grant from the fund.
2. Emergency Loan – short-term funding to overcome delays to available funding or due to an unexpected crisis requiring availability of additional funds at short notice, normally a short-term loan.
3. Diagnostic Assessment Testing Award – To assist students who need financial help to meet particular costs which are not already being met from statutory (or other) sources of funding - normally payment for a diagnostic assessment by the University's Disability and Dyslexia Service, normally paid directly to the service.

To be eligible to apply for the fund the applicant:

- Should be able to demonstrate that they have made reasonable and realistic financial provision prior to the start of their course in order to fund tuition fees, accommodation costs, living costs and all other course related costs.
- Should be able to demonstrate financial hardship.
- Should not have pre-existing priority debts without agreed payment plans**
- Should be fully registered/enrolled on their course.
- Should be studying full-time or, if part-time, be studying at least 50% of a full-time course. Disabled students who, due to the nature of their disability, are unable to study at 50% intensity, may apply for support from the fund if they are studying at least 25% of a full time course.

- Should not normally have tuition fee arrears without an active, up to date financial arrangement.
- If assessed as home for the purpose of fees, must have taken out the full means tested (based on household income) students loan and / or grant entitlement and be in receipt of the first instalment.*
- If registered on a programme delivered in part at the London Brunel International Collage (LBIC) the applicant should not normally have tuition fee arrears with LBIC and should have accessed all financial support offered by LBIC prior to requesting an application to the University fund.
- Should not normally have outstanding reassessments in the summer.
- Should not normally be within a month of the end of their current course.
- Must undertake financial capability training, as directed, before receiving an award from the main fund.

Applicants to the fund may be directed to access additional support from the Student Centre, The Student Support and Welfare Team or the Advice and Representation Centre (ARC) at the Union of Brunel Students as appropriate.

Further information on University services and support is available [here](#).

Further information on ARC services is available [here](#).

** Where the first instalment of statutory funding is delayed, a short-term loan may be appropriate.*

*** Mature undergraduate students are an exception to this and may be considered for an award with pre-existing priority debts if it is appropriate.*

The amount of funding is not inexhaustible and so priority will be given to students who are able to demonstrate most need. However the following student groups are deemed by the Government as having particular needs and so will be considered more urgently*:

- Students with children (especially lone parents).
- Students from low-income families.
- Disabled students (especially where the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) are unable to meet particular costs and the institution has no legal responsibility to do so).
- Care leavers.
- Students from Foyers or who are homeless.
- Students receiving the final year loan rate who are in financial difficulty (including those who are unable to work because of academic pressure).
- Mature students with existing financial commitments, including priority debts.
- Students who are assessed as being estranged from their parents by their relevant funding body
- Young Carers

Students in hardship can usually apply to the fund for a main award once* in each academic year and will be required to undertake financial capability training prior to any award from the fund.

**if circumstances change at any point during the year a student can request a further application and will be required to provide evidence to support the change in their circumstances. Previous awards from the fund in the current year will be taken into account in these cases.*

University Hardship Fund Policy 2019/20



Summer Assessments.

After the summer exams have ended it may be possible to get support from the fund during the summer vacation period, subject to the normal terms and conditions of the fund as described in this policy. These awards are normally subject to additional conditions. The University will offer support from the fund to students*:

- Non-final year students.
- Students with children
- Students who are repeating part of their course in the following academic year.
- Students who are ill or have a disability and are therefore unable to undertake work and for whom benefits are not available.
- Students with no alternative means of support.

These awards are subject to the normal terms and conditions of the fund which are described in this policy.

The current University term dates are available [here](#).

** Based on the latest NASMA Higher Education Support Fund guidance available.*

The University Hardship Fund is administered on behalf of the University by the University Funding Team. All applications made to the fund are processed according to University policy and guidelines. These have been compared to those across the sector to ensure that students at Brunel University London are not unduly disadvantaged. The fund is administered using the SITS record database and applications are assessed by a team of Funding Officers with reference to current NASMA guidance.

For more information and to find out how to apply for the fund please visit the [Student Centre Funding Pages](#) or by using the link below:

<https://intra.brunel.ac.uk/s/studentcentre/Money/Pages/Funding.aspx>

For information on the current NASMA guidance, please refer to the [NASMA website](#).