

Hardship Fund Applications 2023-24

Students who have applied and been successful in their hardship application will be awarded up to £500 as a one-off payment to help with financial difficulties,

multiple applications can be submitted throughout the year but cannot be awarded more than £500 in total when taking in to consideration all previous applications submitted that academic year.

Criteria for the acceptance or rejection of claims for Hardship

The fund is for current students only and cannot support students who are pre-entry, studying on an Apprenticeship or standalone modules.

Students can only Apply for the Hardship fund if they have taken up or are in receipt of all Statutory Support that is available. i.e. Maintenance Loan / Tuition Fee Loan

If you are unable to apply through student finance for your tuition fee and are paying for your course, you will need to have paid the tuition fee or set up a payment plan to be eligible to apply to the hardship fund.

Please note that the hardship funding cannot be used to pay for tuition fees

Who can apply?

- Students who have entered Higher education from care for a period of time spanning their 16th birthday (Regardless of age now)
- Students from Foyers or who are homeless
- Students who are 18-24 and have no communicative relationship with either living biological parent or wider family
- Students from low income families
- Disabled Students where DSA is unable to meet particular costs
- Students who suffer unforeseen change of circumstance during their studies

If you are not in one of the above groups you can still apply but you will need to provide all evidence relating to financial hardship.

All applications for hardship will be assessed on a case by case basis at case conference and will be to the discretion of the Higher Education Director

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Higher Education Hardship Fund

1.1 The Birmingham Metropolitan College Hardship Fund provides limited discretionary financial support for students who are experiencing financial difficulty and are unable to meet basic or unexpected additional costs from other sources of support. The fund can also offer limited support to students who have experienced a change in financial circumstances due to unforeseen events.

1.2 The fund is intended to act as a safety net for those in financial difficulty rather than a main source of income. The size of the fund is limited, and we may not be able to meet your need in full or guarantee that funds will be available, especially towards the end of an academic year. Awards are discretionary and are paid in the form of a non-repayable grant.

1.3 The hardship fund cannot fully compensate for the lack of parental contribution; especially where a student has only been able to take out the non-means tested part of the Student Loan though some limited support may be available. If you already hold a Higher Education (H.E.) qualification which is the same or higher than the course you plan to study, then you may not be eligible for statutory funding for the Student Loans Company. If this is the case, then you will not be eligible to receive an award from the Hardship Fund.

1.4 The maximum award payable in exceptional circumstances is £500.

Conditions and eligibility

2.1 Higher Education Hardship Fund, which includes educational visits, equipment, travel and uniform. This Fund is only available to UK or European Union (EU) students studying one of the following qualifications:

(a) Foundation Degree awarded by Birmingham City University

(c) Higher National Certificate/Diploma awarded by Pearson UK

2.2 Students who are studying one of the following qualifications are advised to contact the Student Services Team at the awarding University for details regarding the financial support available to them:

(a) Foundation Degree awarded by the University of Worcester

(b) Higher National Diploma awarded by Birmingham City University

2.3 All eligible Higher Education students are required to complete a hardship application form and provide a copy of their financial notification letter from Student Finance England (SFE) and evidence of their and their partner's, if applicable, income and expenditure at the time of application, with a signed declaration. As this Fund is limited each application is individually assessed and students will receive notification in writing of the outcome within 10 working days of receipt of the application.

Eligibility Criteria

3.1 This fund is only available to UK or EU residents and have received support from SFE.

3.2 All students who are studying one of the qualifications identified in Section 2.1 are entitled to apply to the Higher Education Hardship Fund. Each application will be assessed equitably and subject to guidelines and availability of funds from SFE is taken into account.

Potential Support Available

3.3 A 50% contribution towards educational visits which attendance is required at to complete assessment work towards the qualification of study.

3.4 A 50% contribution towards equipment and uniform which is required to complete assessment work towards the qualification of study and is not above the equipment or uniform that has already been supplied by the College.

3.5 A maximum award of £500.00 can be issued to a student during the academic year which can be made up of one or a contribution of the support outlined in Sections 3.3 and 3.4.

Compliance

4.1 In the first instance resolving queries and complaints is the responsibility of the Higher Education Office. Appeals regarding awards which cannot be resolved by the Higher Education Office should be made within 14 working days of the date of the original decision in writing to the Student Finance Manager who will respond to the appeal within 10 working days.

4.2 Appeals and complaints which cannot be resolved, concerning failure to comply with policy or published procedures should be made in accordance with BMet's Customer Complaints and Compliments Policy.