

# Student Support Fund Guidance Notes

Managed by the [Student Financial Support team](#) in Registry

The Student Support Fund is funded by the College alongside generous donations from our staff, alumni and other supporters. The aim of the fund is to provide financial assistance for living costs to current students who are facing financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances. This **excludes any support towards tuition fees and visas**.

You must be currently enrolled at Imperial College London and are expected to demonstrate that you had funding in place when you commenced your course of study. The Fund is to be used when there are no further financial avenues available.

Awards are not usually made within your first term, or if you are on an Interruption of Studies. However, if you feel you have mitigating circumstances which have occurred after commencing your course then you are welcome to apply.

Undergraduate students from the Faculty of Medicine must apply to the Faculty of Medicine Hardship Fund before applying to the Student Support Fund. Information on how to apply to this fund is available via Medlearn: <https://medlearn.imperial.ac.uk/welfare/financial-support/school-of-medicine-hardship-fund/>

The fund is not intended to subsidise longer term cost associated with studying and cannot replace core funding from government loans. You must demonstrate that you have utilised all funding available to you (e.g. Undergraduate government maintenance loans, maintenance grants, Postgraduate Loans or Postgraduate Career Development Loans). We reserve the right to reject an application when there has been no attempt to make a reasonable provision.

All applications are assessed by a single mechanism to ensure transparency and fairness. The assessment mechanism is based on a set of values associated with the [Cost of Living](#) in London (CLL). The CLL framework is intended to identify the cost students would normally have during their studies. The CLL figures are real Imperial College student average expenditures, taken from the Student Experience Survey in 2022-2023.

## **Value of awards**

### **Grants**

A grant does not need to be paid back. The value of these can be **up to £5,000**, and on average we award around £1,200 dependent on evidenced financial need. Awards are based on living expense essentials such as for rent, food, travel and bills. Students can reapply in the same year but must be presenting new circumstances to be considered for further support.

### **Loans (emergency, interest free)**

You can apply for a loan where you have delayed funding, or we may offer you a loan instead of a grant, which will need to be paid back. The maximum payment of loans is £5,000, and students will need to demonstrate how you will repay in your application.

## Assistance with graduation costs

Grants can be awarded to assist students with graduation costs, which will not need to be paid back. The maximum grant for these costs is £500, and awards are based off need for costs that would otherwise prohibit the student from participating in ceremonies. These costs may include tickets, gown hire, photographs, and travel and/ or accommodation where necessary (not international travel).

## DAS assessment needs gap

The Disability Advisory Service offer subsidised needs assessments for students, with a gap of £95. Students can be referred to the Student Support Fund if they need assistance with this. The £95 should be awarded to students unless they appear to have substantial funds available.

## Student Global Relief Fund

The Student Global Relief fund operates in the same way as the Student Support Fund, but is only for international students who have had full scholarships discontinued due to significant global events. These events may be anything impacting the economy or governance of your home country which might include (but not limited to) war or natural disasters. Unlike the Student Support Fund, if your Student Global Relief Fund application is successful, we may be able to assist with support for both living costs and tuition fee assistance; up to the funding values and dates stated in your initial scholarship.

## Assessment of application

All students have different levels of income and expenditure. We apply a cap (based on the Cost of Living in London values) for all general living and household costs, such as rent, food, travel and utility bills. This will enable us to ensure that the Fund does not reward lifestyle choice.

Note that 39 weeks (9 months) assessments apply to UG students apart from 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year Medicine students who are considered as being in study for the 52 weeks (full year) period. Postgraduate students are also assessed over the 52 weeks (full year) period.

As part of the assessment of your application, we will consider any information provided through your supporting statement. We will assess each application on its own merit. We may ask you for further information during the assessment of your application. If we don't receive the requested information back within requested timeframes, we may withdraw (close) your application.

Applications are closely examined by two administrators. The first administrator will make an initial assessment and recommend action based on their findings to a second administrator who will review the recommendation to ensure all questions have been made and answered and agree a formal decision.

## Timeframes of assessment

Although we publish **10 working days service agreement** as minimum to students, we aim to assess applications to our Student Support Fund as quickly as possible. Assessments can be delayed where we require additional documentation or information.

In cases where the funding is needed urgently, please contact the Student Financial Support team via email at: [student.funding@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:student.funding@imperial.ac.uk).

## Reasons for unsuccessful applications

- Enrolment statuses such as withdrawn or interruption (exceptional cases on interruption considered)
- Unsatisfactory financial provisions put in place; particularly if applying in first term
- No financial need proven, if you have enough funds for the current study period
- Statutory funding hasn't been claimed; All Home fee paying students must demonstrate that they have taken all funding available to them including Government loans. This includes students who have not taken loans for religious reasons, in line with the higher education sector.
- No unexpected circumstances that have impacted finances, with some exemptions considered:
  - Students who were impacted by COVID disruption such as final year PGR;
  - 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year MBBS students can be considered without unexpected circumstances on a case by case basis due to their placement commitments and longer academic year
- Incomplete applications, including requested documents not provided after a two-week deadline provided in a reminder may also be concluded as unsuccessful

## Supporting documents

### Documents required and what we use them for

- **Most recent 3 months bank statement for all active accounts**, including non- UK and savings accounts. We use this to confirm the current bank balance, assess spending habits, and identify additional income that may not have been declared
- **Evidence of funding**, such as
  - statutory Student Finance loans, parental allowances, DSA and bursary statements
  - Scholarship confirmation so we can confirm amounts and terms
  - Most recent 3 pay slips if applicable

### Documents which may be requested and what we use them for

- **Proof of outstanding debts** like a credit card statement so we can confirm expenditure.
- **Household utility bills** so we can confirm expenditure
- **Accommodation tenancy agreement** so we can confirm expenditure including deposit and living arrangements. Where there are informal rent agreements, an email from the person you are paying matched up with cited bank payments is sufficient.
- If you are living with a **partner** you may be asked to send us their bank statements or other documentation to evidence current income or financial commitments.
- If students apply for assistance due to childcare costs we will need to see confirmation of nursery costs or child tax credits or maintenance payments.
- You may also send us any other documentation which you feel may support your case such as a doctor's letter or bailiff's letter.

We accept scanned copies of these documents.

### **References from your academic department**

While it's not required, you may want to include an email from your tutor or department's Welfare Adviser if they are aware of your circumstances. This can help add further context to your circumstances. If you wish to include this, please upload the email as an additional supporting document.

### **Reminders for documents and further information**

We may send reminders for any missing documents which you can upload in the Blackbullion Funds Management System. If we don't receive the requested documentation back within requested timeframes, we may withdraw (close) your application.

## **Outcome notifications**

We will provide the outcome of your application to you in writing via the Blackbullion Funds Management System.

If you disagree with the outcome, based on this guidance of how the Student Support Fund is operated, you can appeal by writing to [sfs.feedback@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:sfs.feedback@imperial.ac.uk), where the Head of Student Financial Support will consider your original application alongside any additional information provided. The response time for this is usually within 3 working days, unless further information is requested. Students may be asked to provide further bank statements if previous documents provided are over a month old.

## **Payment**

We ask all successful applicants to accept the value of the award and any associated conditions (if applicable) before we process the payment to your bank account stated on the application form. Payments take up to 5 working days to reach the nominated bank account.

In cases where the funding is needed urgently, please contact the Student Financial Support team via email at: [student.funding@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:student.funding@imperial.ac.uk).