

College Hardship Fund 2016/17

The College Hardship Fund aims to assist students who experience unexpected financial difficulties due to circumstances which could not have been predicted at the start of your course.

Making an application

Students must demonstrate the following in their application:

- How your financial situation has changed since your studies began.
- Why these changes are unexpected and could not have been predicted at the start of your course.
- What steps you are taking to find alternative funding. Students who are in the early years of their course will be expected to demonstrate that they have looked at their budget.

What is the application process and is there a deadline.

Applications are available from the Student Welfare office and also online from the Student Welfare page on e-studio.

The Student Welfare team may need to discuss the situation with you and see if there are other ways in which you can help cut back on expenses. It would be a good idea if before you ask for a Hardship Form you have read the information on the following link: <http://portal.leeds-art.ac.uk/student-finances/managing-your-money> and have also had a detailed look at your budget.

Students will be required to provide evidence of Student Finance funding through a copy of their support letter, three months bank statements, named copy of the tenancy agreement. If living at home whilst studying then any money paid to parents as board will **not** be taken into consideration.

There is no set deadline for applications, however it should be stressed that applications will not be taken in before the start of the academic year and applications will not be accepted after the end of the academic year.

Funds are limited and as such once the funds are spent the fund will close to any and all applications.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Undergraduate students in receipt of a full or partial maintenance grant.
- Postgraduate students who have applied for and taken out the maximum Graduate Loan, Professional Studies Loan or Career Development Loan available, before applying to the fund.

Priority Groups

- Care leavers, as long as evidence is supplied to support their application.
- Carers, evidence to support that you are a carer will be required.

- Students in their final year will normally be given priority as they receive less funding in the final year and have their final major projects to complete.
- Student requiring support in funding a dyslexia test

Who is not eligible to apply?

Awards will **not** be made to the following groups of students:

- Students who are not currently enrolled. This includes suspended and lapsed students;
- Students who are applying for assistance before the start of their course;
- Visiting students who are not eligible for funding from the College.
- Home undergraduates who have not been financially assessed by their regional funding agency unless there is a valid reason;
- Students who do not appear to have a funding shortfall. Assessments are made on the basis of a comparison of a student's income for the current academic year with the College's estimated living costs.

Awards will **not normally** be made to the following groups of students unless there are exceptional circumstances:

- Students who have already received assistance from the College Hardship Fund within the same academic semester;
- Students who are beyond their fourth year of study.

How are applications assessed?

Applications are assessed against the budget statement submitted as part of the application but will exclude the cost of accommodation as this will not be classed as an unexpected expense. It is expected that students whose expenses are particularly heavy, for whatever reason, will draw the Welfare Team's attention to this fact in their application.

This will entail the calculation of expenses against income taking into account any bursaries or income earned by the student in year.

To this end students will be expected to submit evidence of their income and expenditure (including a budget breakdown). Evidence required is:

- Budget breakdown.
- Student Finance breakdown evidencing amount of support being provided.
- 3 months bank statements.
- Banking information form.
- Copy of tenancy agreement
- Any outstanding bills or evidence to show an unexpected outgoing.

Please note: also taken into account are any funds received or due to be paid by the College in the form of bursaries or previous hardship payments received within the academic year.

For dyslexia support, students will need to bring the following evidence:

- Student Finance breakdown evidencing amount of support being provided.
- Dast Test sheet.

Support for Dyslexia will be based on the following:

For Level 4 students

- Those in receipt of a full maintenance loan of £8,200 have to contribute £60
- Those in receipt of a maintenance loan below £8,200 have to contribute £130

For returning Level 5 and 6 students

- Those in receipt of a full maintenance grant of £3,387 have to contribute £60
- Those with a partial maintenance grant have to contribute £100
- Those who do not receive any maintenance grant have to contribute £160
- The dyslexia test will not be organised or confirmed until payment has been made by the student.
- Information about how to pay will be emailed to the students college email account.

How does the Welfare Team define unexpected circumstances?

The following circumstances are **not** considered unexpected and will not result in an award:

- Cost of accommodation;
- Students who are unable to obtain paid employment unless a contract was in place prior to commencing their studies;
- Students who require assistance with childcare costs, where this has not been taken into account at the start of their studies
- Students who need assistance in repaying debts which were in existence prior to start of their course.
- Students who require assistance with costs associated with dependents should have already have applied for additional funding through Student Finance England.
- Students who require funding to replace damaged or stolen belongings will be expected to report losses to the police and make any insurance claims before applying to the College Hardship Fund;
- Students whose parents or sponsors have allegedly withdrawn their support unless there are exceptional circumstances.

How are students notified of the outcome?

Students will be informed of the Welfare Team's decision regarding the application via the College email. Payment will be made directly into the nominated bank account taken as part of the application to all students except those needing payment for a dyslexia test.