

UWE Bursary Policy for undergraduate students starting after 1 September 2017

This policy does not cover the bursaries paid to students who started their UWE course prior to 2017/18 academic year nor does it cover the bursary paid to students liable for tuition fees of £3,465.

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Vision Statement

The purpose of the UWE Bursary is to provide financial support to applicants, who because of their background and personal circumstances do not normally aspire or progress to higher education. Financial support will continue throughout their studies. The UWE Bursary is available for undergraduate students only.

Objectives

The objectives of the bursary scheme are to:

1. Satisfy the requirements of the UWE Access Agreement.
2. Provide a fair and transparent process for awarding bursaries.
3. Provide applicants with money in their pockets, rather than fee waivers.

1.0 Policy

This policy covers the Bursary scheme for new applicants starting their course after 1 September 2017. It does not cover the Bursary scheme available to applicants who started their studies prior to 1 September 2017.

If you do not receive a bursary in your first year, you will not receive one in subsequent years of your course. Entitlement to the Bursary is set in year one.

There are three kinds of bursary for new students starting in 2017:

Category 1: 80 Enhanced Bursaries for full time applicants who are:

- estranged from their parents,
- care leavers or
- caring for a disabled or ill family member.

Cash payment of £2,000 in year 1, £1,000 in subsequent years.

Category 2: 1,300 Low Income Bursary for applicants with an income below £25,000. This income threshold may be lower or higher than £25,000 depending on the number of eligible applicants.

Cash payment of £500 for each year of study.

Childcare Bursary: 150 Childcare Bursary is paid to applicants with dependent children studying one of the following courses:

- BSc (Hons) Nursing (Children's) (B702)
- BSc (Hons) Nursing (Adult Nursing) (B701)

BSc (Hons) Nursing (Mental Health) (B704)
BSc (Hons) Nursing (Learning Disabilities) (B703)
BSc (Hons) Midwifery (B711)
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (B920)
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science (B950)
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy (B160)
BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology (B822)

The Childcare Bursary is £2,000 in the first year and £1,000 for each subsequent year.

All of the above courses have compulsory placements that take up 40% - 50% of the time spent on the course. The cost of childcare to enable attendance on placements will exceed the weekly grant provided by Student Finance England.

There are 80 Enhanced Bursaries, 150 Childcare Bursaries and 1,300 Low Income Bursaries to allocate in 17/18 academic year. Successful applicants will receive one type of bursary only even if they meet the criteria for all three.

The university may adjust the numbers of each type of Bursary but cannot exceed the total budget. This means that meeting the criteria does not guarantee an award.

Students in receipt of one of the above bursaries will continue to receive a bursary (referred to as a progressions bursary) in subsequent year of study, as long as they meet the requirements of the registration checks. Students will not be reassessed following bursary allocation even if their financial situation changes.

1.1 Personal Eligibility

Eligible applicants will be:

an English-resident applicant entering **year one (level 0 of level 1)** of an undergraduate degree at UWE

entitled to funding for fees and living costs from SFE (Student Finance England)

from a household with an income of £25,000 or less as assessed by SFE

entitled to and have taken out the full tuition fee loan for 2017/18

without any HE qualification such as a Certificate of HE, a Foundation Degree, HND, etc.

The exception to this rule is if the applicant is starting a course previously funded by the NHS, then their HE qualifications are ignored for the purpose of allocation of bursary.

If an applicant receives full or part sponsorship (for example from an employer or the MoD) for their tuition fees, they are not eligible for a UWE Bursary.

1.2 Previous study at UWE

If an applicant transfers between courses at UWE (after completing the previous academic year) they will not be entitled to the 2017/18 Bursary as entitlement (or not) to a Bursary is set in the first year of study at UWE.

If an applicant withdraws from a course and has re-applied via UCAS for a new course at UWE, they will be considered for the 2017/18 Bursary automatically.

1.3 Course Eligibility

Applicants must be studying at level 1 or level 0 on an undergraduate degree in 2017/18. The course must be taught at UWE or at one of our Franchise partner colleges. Applicants studying on a 'validation-only' course at one of our Franchise partner colleges are not eligible for the UWE Bursary.

1.4 The UWE Progression Bursary

Applicants who receive a bursary in 2017/18 will be eligible for a PB (Progression Bursary) in subsequent years of study, subject to the maximum award.

Once an applicant has received the maximum award, there will be no further payments of the bursary, even if the applicant has not completed their course.

Amount of PB:

If an applicant receives the Enhanced or Childcare Bursary of £2,000 in 2017/18, they will be eligible for a PB of £1,000 for each subsequent year of study.

If an applicant receives the Low Income Bursary of £500 in 2017/18, they will be eligible for a PB of £500 for each subsequent year of study.

Payment of the PB is subject to the successful completion of the registration and payment check each year (see 3.1).

1.5 Maximum Awards of the UWE Bursary

The maximum number of bursaries a student may receive (either in year one or a PB) depends on the length of their course. A Bursary or a PB will be paid each year of the course for the ordinary duration of the course plus one extra year. For example, a student on a three year course, receives a bursary in year one, a PB for years two and three. If they had to repeat a year of study, and thereby extend the three years to four, they would still receive a bursary for the additional year. If they extend the course beyond that extra year, they will not receive a bursary. The maximum award applies to full and part-time applicants.

The table below illustrates the maximum number of bursaries by course type for full time applicants.

Part-time applicants are subject to the same maximum award but the number of bursaries that they receive will depend on their intensity of study. For example, a part-time applicant taking 50% of a full-time Foundation Degree (a two-year full-time) would be entitled to a maximum of 4 PBs.

Type of course	Maximum number of Progression Bursaries Full-time
Foundation Degree	2
3 Year Degree	3
Sandwich Degree	4
Architecture	7

1.6 Appeal Process

It is UWE's responsibility to operate a transparent and fair process for allocating bursaries. Should an applicant be dissatisfied with the decision regarding their bursary application, they will have the right to appeal. Appeals must be made by the applicant in writing or by email. Parents or family members cannot appeal on behalf of an applicant unless the applicant has provided explicit consent in writing (or by email).

Appeals are made to the Head of Money Advice and Funds Service (MAFS). When considering an appeal, we check that the application was processed correctly and consider any additional information or documents that are provided in support of the case. It is not possible to allocate a bursary on appeal where the institutional eligibility criteria have not been met.

We aim to respond to appeals within 2 weeks of receipt.

2.0 Evidence for the Bursary

There are two types of evidence required for the UWE Bursary: evidence that confirms status and evidence of low-income.

2.1 Evidence of Care Leaver Status

Applicants will qualify (whatever their age at the start of their course) if they have been in care for 3 months between the ages of 11 to 16 **and/or** have lived in supported housing from the ages of 16 to 18 **and** have not returned to live with their parents since.

Applicants will be asked for evidence from a third party (such as a Social Worker) that confirms the above status, including confirmation that the applicant has not returned to live with parents.

This category does not include applicants who have been the subject of a residence order.

2.2 Evidence of Carer Status

Applicants will qualify if they provide regular and significant daily care to a disabled or ill family member. It is expected that applicants will be living at the same address as the person to whom they provide care at the date of their UCAS application. However, applicants can still qualify for this Bursary even if they move away from home to study at UWE.

The person the applicant provides care for must receive one of the following benefits:

- Attendance Allowance
- Council Tax Reduction or Housing Benefit that includes a disability premium as part of the assessment
- Disability Living Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Tax Credits that include a disability element.

Carers must provide:

An award notice for the qualifying benefit (dated 2017) for the person that the applicant provides care for. This will need to show the same address as that held by UWE on application **and** evidence that the applicant is providing regular and ongoing daily care. This should be confirmation from a third party such as GP, teacher, Carers network or similar organisation.

If an applicant is unable to provide the above evidence, then they will need to provide a letter from their relative confirming that the applicant is providing care plus a letter from the applicant that details the care provided.

2.3 Evidence of Estranged Status

Applicants will qualify if they are permanently estranged from their parents (i.e. have had no contact with them) and that this has lasted for at least a year and are under 25 years of age on 1 September 2017.

Usually, applicants must be assessed by Student Finance England as estranged. Estranged applicants must provide a copy of the evidence that they used to apply to SFE for their assessment as an independent applicant. This will include a copy of the supporting letters from a third party e.g. teacher, GP etc.

2.4 Evidence for the Childcare Bursary

Applicants will need to provide evidence that they are responsible for a child under the age of 14. This can be the 2017 award letter for either child benefit or tax credit. One childcare bursary will be paid per eligible student regardless of the number of children.

2.5 Evidence of income - full-time applicants

All bursary recipients must have household income below £25,000. The income-assessment is that used by SFE to assess entitlement to funding. No alternative income-assessment will be used.

As long as applicants and their parents (or partner) provide consent when applying for their statutory funding, the information will be provided to UWE from July 2017 onwards. If there is a delay in processing of funding applications, or an applicant has applied late, the income information may not be received in time to allocate a bursary.

Current Year Income

If an applicant's household income has reduced by 15% since the 2015/16 financial year (this is the year used by SFE to assess entitlement to funding), the applicant can request a 'current year' assessment. This means that SFE use the 2017/18 financial year to assess entitlement to funding. This funding is 'provisional' and will not be confirmed until April 2018. So if an applicant does not meet the criteria using the 'historical' income, there is no alternative income that can be used. In these cases, an applicant will not receive a bursary.

2.6 Evidence of income – part-time applicants

The income assessment for part-time applicants is that used by SFE for assessing entitlement to the fee grant. However, as SFE do not income-assess current part-time applicants, applicants will need to provide evidence of their income to UWE.

Applicants will need to provide evidence of benefit entitlement or evidence of their (and where appropriate partner's) gross income.

Benefits

If an applicant is receiving one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Local Housing Allowance
- Council Tax Benefit
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- An allowance under the arrangements known as the New Deal
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

They will need to provide a recent award letter (dated 2017) or a letter from the Local Council or the DWP confirming entitlement.

Income-assessment

Applicants not in receipt of the above benefits will need to provide evidence of their gross taxable income for the 2015/16 financial year and information about their family circumstances.

This can include P60s, confirmation of income if for the self-employed and/or wage slips. The applicant will also need to provide evidence for their children (such as a child benefit award notice).

The following disregards should be applied to the gross taxable income of the applicant:

- £2,000 allowance for the applicant's partner
- £2,000 for an only or eldest dependent child
- £1,000 each for any subsequent dependent children

Child Benefit and Tax Credits are ignored in the calculation.

A PT applicant can, under certain circumstances, elect to have their application assessed on the basis of their income in the current financial year. As with full-time applicants, this income would not be confirmed until the April after the start of the academic year. In these cases, an applicant will not receive a bursary.

3.00 Allocation and Payment of bursaries

It is beneficial for the applicant to know whether they have been allocated a bursary as soon as possible. SFE sends income details to UWE during the summer. This means that it is not possible to allocate provisionally much earlier than late August early September each year. Bursary entitlement is only confirmed after the registration and payment checks.

3.1 Allocation of the 80 Enhanced Bursaries

It is anticipated that a student meeting the criteria (as outlined in 1.0 and 2.0) in 2017/18 will be paid an enhanced bursary. If there are more than 80 students meeting the criteria in 2017, then the number of low-income bursaries allocated will be reduced so as to support these priority students.

Entitlement cannot be 'backdated.' A student who meets the criteria *after* their first year at UWE will not be entitled to the UWE Bursary. Support can be provided from the Learner Support Fund.

3.2 Allocation of the 150 Childcare Bursaries

Allocation will be to students with the youngest children first. This will focus support on students with the higher childcare costs and the least access to the 'free hours' provided by the government.

Applicants with children under the age of 15 (or under the age of 17 if the child is in receipt of a disability benefit) are eligible.

Entitlement cannot be 'backdated.' A student who meets the criteria *after* their first year at UWE will not be entitled to the UWE Bursary. Support can be provided from the Learner Support Fund.

3.3 Allocation of the 1,300 Low-income Bursaries

Allocation is to the lowest income student first so students with a 'zero' household income will be awarded a bursary first. Allocation will continue until all 1,300 have been allocated.

In previous years, the income threshold has been £27,000, £20,000 and £15,000 so it is difficult to predict the final income threshold for 2017/18. The inclusion of students on NHS Courses in the Bursary Scheme will change the demographics of the income levels.

If all 80 Enhanced Bursaries have been allocated but a first year student meets the criteria, the number of low-income bursaries will be reduced by 4 so as to support the carer/care leaver or estranged student.

3.4 Registration and Payment Checks

After the start of the academic year, Academic Services will check the following:

1. the applicant is fully registered (REG and ON in ISIS) on level one on a qualifying course for the first time at UWE
2. the applicant is in receipt of the full tuition fee loan from SFE
3. there is no sponsorship for tuition fees and the fee loan is covering the full fees for the course
4. intensity of study matches the level of fee loan for part-time applicants
5. qualifying course and highest qualification on entry
6. Verified residual income as assessed by SFE
7. Campus/taught-at site

8. For Progression Bursaries, that the maximum award has not been reached (see 1.5)

If an applicant fails the checks, the bursary cannot be paid and will be re-allocated. This includes applicants who suspend before the first payment, the bursary will be re-allocated.

3.5 Payment of the Bursary

The Enhanced and Childcare Bursary will be paid directly into a student's bank account in three equal instalments.

The payment months are:

17th November 2017

16th February 2018

18th May 2018

The Low-income Bursaries are paid on 16th February 2017

4.00 Changes post payment

Changes that will or will not affect entitlement to a bursary after the first payment has been made are listed below.

4.1 Changes to Mode of Study

A full-time student can withdraw from their full-time award and register on a part-time award. A part-time student can become a full-time student via the same process. If a student changes their 'award' mode of study, they will no longer be entitled to the bursary.

4.2 Changes to Mode of Attendance

If a student changes their intensity of study during the academic year, and after the first payment has been made, the amount of their bursary payment will not change.

4.3 Changes to Intensity of Study for Part-Time Applicants

As the bursary for part-time students is not linked to intensity of study, the award will remain the same as long as the student does not reduce their intensity below 25%. If they do, they forfeit their entitlement to the Bursary that year (and the tuition fee loan).

4.4 Time-outs

If a student suspends from their course before the first payment, they will lose their entitlement to a bursary and it will be re-allocated.

If a student suspends from their studies after the first payment, they will not be entitled to any bursary payments after the date of suspension. However, they will keep entitlement to the Progression Bursary if they return either to their course or transfer to another qualifying course at UWE. However, there is a time limit. The applicant must return within 2 calendar years.

For example, a student suspends in January 2018, the start of the second term of their first year. They have already one instalment of the Category 1 Bursary. They will not be entitled to any further instalments. As long as they return to their studies by January 2020, they will be eligible for their Progression Bursary, subject to the maximum award for the length of their course.

4.5 Deferrals

A student can defer their place at UWE as long as they have not registered. If an applicant defers, they lose their entitlement to the UWE Bursary and will be considered along with other applicants against the criteria of the next year's bursary scheme.

4.6 Transfers

A student can transfer to a new course mid-way through an academic year, although this happens rarely. It is more usual for a student to transfer at the very start or at the end of an academic year.

Transfers do not describe the movement between courses where the mode of study changes. So a full-time student is unable to *transfer* to a part-time course.

As long as the student transfers to another qualifying course, they will continue to receive a Bursary, for each year of the new course subject to the maximum award for their new course type. For example, a full-time student transfers from year 2 of a 3 year degree to

year 2 of a 4 year degree. This means that the maximum number of Progression Bursaries is 4 rather than 3.

4.7 Topping-Up

Topping-up describes the process of moving from a completed lower level course such as an HND or Foundation Degree to an honours degree. If a student received a UWE bursary in the first year of the lower level course, they will be eligible for a Progression Bursary for their 'top-up' course as long as they immediately move from the lower level course to the honours degree. This means that the only gap between the two courses is the summer vacation.

4.8 Withdrawals

Students who withdraw completely from their programme lose entitlement to the bursary. They cannot receive a payment after the date of withdrawal. If they return to UWE, they may be eligible for a bursary depending on the criteria for that year of entry.

4.9 Overpaid Bursaries

Unless the bursary has been paid on the basis of fraudulent information, it will not be recovered.

4.10 Recovering Debt from Bursaries

If a student is in debt to the university, their bursary instalment will not be paid until the student discusses repayment with the Finance Department. With the student's permission, debt can be offset against a PB with any balance paid to the student.

5.00 Glossary

- **Cohort:** A cohort is a group of applicants who work through a curriculum together to achieve the same academic degree together. A cohort forms when the applicants begin the curriculum and typically does not admit new members afterward e.g. Applicants who start in September 2012 are a different cohort to those who start in September 2013 and those who start in 2014.
- **HEFCE:** Higher Education Funding Council for England.
- **PB:** Progression Bursary.
- **MAFS:** Money Advice and Funds Service.
- **SFE: Student Finance England**
- **UNITE:** An independent applicant accommodation provider.
- **UWE:** The University of the West of England.
- **UWE Access Agreement:** UWE will make an annual commitment of £10.5 million to reach out and support applicants who despite obtaining the qualifications are still missing out on higher education because of their background.