



Guidance notes for Study Support Fund

(for students in England)

Support Funds

(for students in Northern Ireland)

Application for study-related costs 2017–2018 (for example, childcare, internet access, equipment, travel or DSA PC/Laptop contribution costs).

PLEASE NOTE: If you wish to apply for help with the cost of a diagnostic assessment for a specific learning difficulty, please contact us for a separate application form.

Please read the information below before completing your application form.

The application form can only be used to apply for assistance from one of the above funds. If you require advice on the other types of financial support available please contact Student Fees (contact details can be found on page 11).

What are the Study Support Fund and Support Funds?

The Governments in England and Northern Ireland provide funds to assist students in financial difficulty. Assistance from these funds cannot be used to pay for module fees.

What can I apply for?

The Study Support Fund and Support Funds help students who need extra financial support because they have higher than expected costs or if they face serious financial hardship during their studies.

The Funds are to help eligible students in financial need. Funds are limited. We can only consider applications that meet the criteria detailed in these guidance notes and cannot always meet all requested costs.

When can I apply?

Normally you can only make an application after your module start date, however if you are applying for DSA PC/Laptop contribution costs from Student Finance England, you can apply prior to your module start date. You will need to provide your DSA award letter. Applications can be made up to one calendar month after your final exam date or your end-of-module assessment (EMA) submission date.

Applications for resits/resubmissions can be made for a period of up to one month before EMA or final exam.

Am I eligible?

To qualify for a grant towards study costs you must be

- ▶ studying towards a qualification.
- ▶ actively participating on your module.
- ▶ a 'home student' - have 'settled status' in the UK on the first day of your module and 'ordinarily and lawfully resident' in the UK for the previous three years preceding that date.
- ▶ experiencing financial hardship and be in receipt of a qualifying benefit or have a household income of not more than £25,000*.

You are not eligible to apply for support if you are currently only studying a module(s) of less than 30 credits.

How do I apply?

Complete and return the application form with the evidence required. We will accept your application if you can demonstrate that you meet the eligibility criteria and you have supplied the required supporting evidence. You may send us your application before your module start date but it will not normally be assessed (unless you are applying for DSA PC/Laptop contribution costs) and you will not receive any payment until your module has started.

How is my application assessed?

When deciding whether we can make a payment we will look at what we consider to be reasonable study-related costs.

If you have already received support towards study costs in this academic year in the form of a course grant this will be considered when we make an assessment.

Course grants are only awarded to students in Northern Ireland. Students in England who have received a Tuition Fee Loan are not eligible for a course grant.

If you are facing a financial emergency, or there are special circumstances attached to your application, we will look at this on an individual basis.

What if I do not meet all the criteria?

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria for the Study Support Fund or Support Funds you may be eligible for a discretionary payment from the Student Assistance Fund. If you would like to apply on that basis you should speak to your Student Support Team before making an application.

What if I am in receipt of state benefits?

If you are in receipt of Social Security benefits, payments from the Study Support Fund or Support Funds may affect your benefit payments.

It is your responsibility to check with the Department for Work and Pensions to determine any effect a payment from these funds will have on your benefits. The Open University cannot advise you in this regard.

Help with your application form

- ▶ Read the guidance notes below for each section of the application form before answering the questions.
- ▶ Please complete the form by writing clearly in **black ink** and by ticking the appropriate boxes.
- ▶ If you need more space, please use a separate sheet and attach it to the form.
- ▶ We will not be able to consider your application if you do not answer all the appropriate sections and attach copies of the evidence required. You must complete the mandatory supporting statement in Section 1 Question 1.1.
- ▶ If there is anything on the form you are not sure about please contact Student Fees (contact details can be found on page 11) who will be able to help you fill in the form correctly.
- ▶ Although we make every effort to ensure accuracy, the information in this application form may change in the light of altered regulations or policy, or because of financial or other constraints.

Section 1: Personal details

1.1 Mandatory supporting statement

The Study Support Fund and Support Funds are available to provide support for students in financial hardship who may need extra financial support to access and remain in higher education.

Please ensure you give full details about your circumstances that you feel will support your application. If you are in receipt of a course grant you should detail how this has been used and provide relevant receipts. Please continue on an additional sheet of paper if necessary.



If you do not provide this information, your application will be returned to you.

Section 2: Financial eligibility

2.1 Did you receive statutory or discretionary financial support towards your module fees or receive a course grant in this academic year?

If your module fees were paid for by financial or discretionary support, or you have received a course grant in this academic year please tick 'Yes' and go to Section 4 Household.

You should tick 'No' if you paid your module fees by sponsorship, OUSBA, Tuition Fee Loan or any other method, including funding for an Access module with the code Y031, Y032 or Y033.

If the answer is 'No' please answer question 2.2.

2.2 Have you used a Tuition Fee Loan or Postgraduate Loan?

If you received a Tuition Fee Loan or Postgraduate Loan in this academic year, please tick 'Yes' and provide your Student Finance Customer Reference Number. This is the reference you received when you made your Tuition Fee Loan application and which will be quoted on any correspondence you have received from Student Finance.

2.4 Are you or your partner in receipt of one of the following benefits?

If you have answered 'Yes' to this question you need to provide evidence of the benefit you are receiving. Send us confirmation from your provider dated within three months of this application and go to Section 3 Residency criteria. If you answered 'No' go to question 2.4.



2.5 Household income

You will need to supply income details and evidence for the last complete financial year for yourself and any partner.



Your household income is income received by either yourself and/or your partner. You do not need to include details of parents' income. Partner refers to your husband, wife, partner or civil partner.

If you need advice please contact Student Fees (contact details on page 11).

Evidence required

Your and/or your partner's employment income	P45(s), P60(s) for the last tax year or Photocopy of your and/or your partner's payslips for tax month 12 or tax week 53, showing 'Total paid to date' for earnings in the previous tax year
Your and/or your partner's self-employment income	Photocopy of a letter from your and/or your partner's accountant confirming your income from self-employment or a photocopy of HM Revenue & Custom's tax calculation or If you are a company director, a photocopy of your P60, P11D or independent confirmation of your earnings and director's fees from a chartered or certified accountant
Your own and/or your partner's retirement or disability pension	Photocopy of proof of amount and how often it was paid
Your own and/or your partner's unearned investment income (e.g. interest from bank or building society account, shares or ISAs)	Photocopy of statement (for the last tax year) or Photocopy of a letter from bank, building society or investment companies stating amount and frequency of investment income or interest (for the last tax year)
Your and/or your partner's benefits	Photocopy of full letter from Jobcentre Plus confirming which benefit(s) you received, when you received them and how much you received
Your own and/or your partner's unearned income from property rental or lodgers	Income from rental – Photocopy of tax calculation showing total property rental income or Income from lodgers – Photocopy of a signed letter from lodger confirming amount of rent paid
Your own and/or your partner's maintenance payments	Photocopy of court order or Photocopy of solicitor's letter or Child Support notification
Other income	Photocopy of proof of income including amount and date received to include student loans, bursaries, maintenance payments, redundancy payments etc. received for yourself/ your partner (not your children)

'Partner' refers to your husband, wife, partner or civil partner.

You must provide evidence for all sources of income you have declared in the application form and the evidence you provide must show the same income figures as those you have given in the form. Please note that a copy of your Tax Credit Award letter cannot be accepted as proof of income.

Section 3: Residency criteria

You do not need to complete this section if you answered 'Yes' to either question 2.1 or 2.2.

To qualify for a payment for study-related costs you must be a 'home student'. This is defined as having 'settled status' in the UK on the first day of your course and 'ordinarily and lawfully resident' in the UK on the first day of your course and 'ordinarily and lawfully resident' in the UK for the previous three years preceding that date.

If you have not previously done so, please provide certified evidence of UK residency (see table below).

3.1 Did you have 'settled status' in the UK and were you 'ordinarily and lawfully resident' in the UK on the first day of your course?

'Settled status' means that you can live in the UK permanently without the Home Office

placing any restrictions on how long you may remain. You are free from any restrictions if you are a British citizen, have a right of 'permanent residence' in the UK, have been granted 'indefinite leave to remain' or if you have a 'right of abode' in the UK. Further information about the right of permanent residence and other immigration issues can be obtained from the UK Border Agency at the Home Office at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk.

The first day of the academic year of your course isn't necessarily the first day you began to study your module. It's decided by the period during which that module began, and you can find it from the table on page 6.

You will need to provide certified copies of documents as evidence of residency. You should refer to the information in the table below to identify what evidence is required.

Residency evidence required

Evidence of:	Evidence item required
UK nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified copy of your UK passport or UK birth certificate
EU nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified copy of your passport or national identity card
Parent's Swiss nationality and your relationship to them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified copy of your parent's passport or national identity card (if these show proof of their Swiss nationality and your relationship to them)
Turkish parent's worker status in the UK – your relationship to them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified copy of your parent's passport • Certified copy of your parent's P60 or a letter from their employer
European Economic Area (EEA) or Swiss nationality Employment of the EEA or Swiss national who is working or has worked in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified copy of passport or national identity card Send a copy of one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A P60 or a letter from employer if currently working • Audited accounts, tax returns or details of income if self-employed • A letter from employer confirming the intention to continue working while studying • P45, P60 or letter from previous employer if previously worked in the UK
Settled status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified copy of UK passport or a letter from the Home Office which confirms immigration status
Refugee status Relationship to person holding refugee status if it is not you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified copy of a Home Office letter and an immigration status document, normally a passport • Certified copy of evidence to confirm your relationship to the person who has been granted refugee status
Humanitarian Protection (previously 'leave to enter or remain') Relationship to person holding Humanitarian Protection status if it is not you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified copy of a Home Office letter and an immigration status document, normally a passport • Copy of evidence to confirm your relationship to the person who has been granted Humanitarian Protection or 'leave to enter or remain'



Certifying your documents

Whatever residency document(s) you are supplying, they must be copies. Do not send us originals as we cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to them. A person who falls into one of the categories below must certify your documents.

If the person does not fall into one of these categories, we will be unable to process your application. We cannot accept evidence certified by the Post Office Identity Checking Service.

- consular official
 - local government official
 - minister of religion
 - social worker
 - medical doctor
 - prison officer
 - lawyer
 - probation officer
 - permanent civil servant
 - justice of the peace
 - teacher (active or retired)
 - commissioned officer of the armed forces (active or retired)
 - police officer (active or retired)
- You do not need to know or be known by

the person who is certifying your document. You are simply asking them to verify that they have seen your original documents and that they fall into one of the categories listed.

The person certifying your document should write the following wording on a copy of your original document (preferably on the same side as your document copy, or if space is insufficient, on the reverse):

- 1) 'Verified as a true copy of the original document'
- 2) Signature and name
- 3) Category of person (from above list only)
- 4) Date
- 5) Contact phone number and address (or company stamp)

Alternatively, you may go to your nearest OU office with your **completed** application form and **original** documents, where they will confirm that they have seen appropriate evidence and forward the application on to Student Fees. **Please contact your nearest OU office for times when this service will be available before visiting.** If neither option is suitable, please contact Student Fees for alternative arrangements.

For further help about providing the correct documentation to confirm your identity, please see our further guidance. You can download this at www.open.ac.uk/residency-help

3.2 In the three years before the start of the first academic year of your course, did you live outside the UK and Islands at any time?

You begin your module in the period:	First day of the academic year of your course is:
1 August to 31 December	1 September
1 January to 31 March	1 January
1 April to 30 June	1 April
1 July to 31 July	1 July

Section 4: Household

4.1 Adults in your household

Your household consists of you and, if you have one, your husband, wife, partner or civil partner who lives with you. You should also include details of any adult son/daughter, lodger or co-tenant that live with you. The Government asks us to give priority to certain groups of students when deciding how to allocate the funding, so it's important to give details about dependants.

4.2 Children

For all children listed, please provide **evidence** showing each child's date of birth by supplying copies of their birth certificates, passports or a letter from the Department for Works and Pensions showing Child Benefits or Child Tax Credits received.

If you are in receipt of Working Tax Credit please also send a photocopy of confirmation of your ongoing entitlement.



Section 5: Study information

5.1 Please give the name and code of the qualification you are studying towards

Funding is only available to students studying towards a qualification. You must have told us which qualification you are studying towards to be eligible to apply.

5.2 Module(s) you are currently studying

Please provide the module code, presentation, module title and the number of credits of the module(s) you are currently studying. If you are not sure of any of the details, please complete as much of this section as possible. You must also tell us if you have submitted all TMAs that are due on modules on which you are registered.

5.3 Module participation

As funds are limited, only students who are **actively participating** on modules will be eligible for assistance. We define 'participation' as submission of assignments, attendance at residential schools and interaction with tutor groups, whether at tutorials or through online conferences.

We will not make payments from the fund before your module start date. You should not embark on a module of study if you are dependent upon receiving assistance for study-related costs as funds are limited and your application may not be successful. In exceptional cases DSA PC/Laptop contributions costs may be paid prior to module start date. In these cases if you defer from your module before the module start date, or do not commence your studies, you will be liable to repay any payments you have received.

Section 6: Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

The Government provides financial support for study-related costs which a disabled student incurs as a direct result of their disability. If the items you are applying for support for would be covered under a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), you should make an application to the DSA fund in the first instance. The Study Support Fund and Support Funds are available for students who are not eligible for other types of support and are much more limited. For further information visit www2.open.ac.uk/study/support/disability

6.2 Have you applied for a DSA?

If you answer 'Yes' to question 6.2 please also answer question 6.3 and 6.4. If you answer 'No' to question 6.2 and believe you have additional needs, please visit www2.open.ac.uk/study/support/disability for further information and contact details. Alternatively, contact your Student Support Team whose details are on *StudentHome*.

6.3 Are you resident in England and wish to apply for financial assistance for PC/Laptop contribution costs?

Students resident in England required to pay a £200 contribution towards a PC on which to run their DSA funded assistive software are eligible to apply for help with this cost.

If you answer 'Yes' to question 6.3 you will need to provide a copy of your DSA entitlement letter and a copy of the SFE approved equipment quote. If your application is successful payment will be made directly to your named DSA-QAG accredited supplier on receipt of a suitable invoice.



Section 7: Study-related expenditure

The Study Support Fund and Support Funds are for students who can demonstrate that they are experiencing financial hardship and, if they have received a course grant, their study-related costs exceed any amount already received. Please complete this section in full so that we can assess your application.

We will assess your study-related costs for the duration of your module and may pay any award in instalments.

7.1 Expenditure

You must provide details and evidence and/or receipts for any study costs. Levels of reimbursement are set out on page 9 for specific study costs. Resource is limited, so we need to make sure that the money available can help as many students as possible. **If you have received a course grant for study costs, the amount you received will be deducted from any reimbursement for study costs.**

We reserve the right to decline your application if we are still awaiting evidence from a previous claim.

Please supply **copies** of evidence only (not originals).



Awards are granted entirely at the discretion of the Open University. Claims considered to be in excess of reasonable expenditure may be declined.



Study costs	Evidence to be provided
<p>Residential school accommodation and subsistence charge (students in England only) – If you have been charged the accommodation and subsistence element of your residential school separately from the tuition fee you may claim for reimbursement of this cost. If you have paid this cost yourself reimbursement will be sent in accordance with the information in Section 8 on page 11. If the cost is still outstanding payment will be made directly to the residential school. Support is not available for Science related residential schools.</p>	<p>Not required – we will only make payment once your residential school has started and we have confirmed your attendance. Please be aware that there are some exceptions and your costs may not always be covered.</p>
<p>Travel – travel costs may be claimed for OU organised events such as tutorials, day schools, exams etc. Reimbursement for travel expenses is normally limited to the original venue and/or tutor nominated for your module. Payments will be limited to public transport or private car (not taxi) costs only. Only fuel costs will be covered when travelling by car at a rate of 37.5p per mile.</p>	<p>Copies of any receipts/tickets for public transport used and details of any journeys undertaken for example, venues, dates and mode of transport. Please also include a copy of your tutorial timetable or evidence of the event you have attended and confirmation from your tutor that you have attended.</p>
<p>Childcare – We do not pay the full cost of childcare. A contribution may be available at a fixed rate of up to £4.00 per hour. The Government provides Free Early Years Education and Childcare and you will only receive a contribution towards any childcare paid over and above the level of free childcare you are entitled to, which will be paid monthly in arrears. To claim Childcare costs you will also need to complete a Childcare costs application form available from Student Fees.</p> <p>You can only claim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• for study-related childcare• if the childcare provider is a registered OFSTED provider (NCMA in Northern Ireland or CSSIW in Wales)• support during normal school hours• if it is not possible for your spouse/partner to provide childcare while you study• support until the examination dates or, if applicable, your end-of-module assessment. <p>You can not claim for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the cost of childcare during any of your hours of employment or work placement• support outside of normal school hours, weekends or on bank holidays where the child is school age.	<p>You must provide all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• name and address of childcare provider• a completed Childcare costs form with supporting evidence (forms available from Student Fees, please see the back page of the application form for contact details)• an invoice/receipt showing the cost of childcare• a note of your working hours and a copy of your Tax Credit letter• unless you are a single parent please give a statement to tell us why it is necessary for you to pay for childcare instead of your spouse/partner being able to look after your child/ children while you study• a copy of your child's birth certificate or passport if you have not previously provided.
<p>Internet access – We will consider internet access costs up to a maximum rate of £20 per month for the duration of your module(s). Funding is not available for cost of calls, set up fees or payments for account arrears. Funding is not available for the cost of both Dongles and broadband. Funding is not available if someone in your household has already been awarded a grant to cover the costs of internet.</p>	<p>A copy of your Internet Service Provider's most recent bill/statement showing your name, address and the charges paid.</p>

Continued on page 10



Study costs	Evidence to be provided
<p>Set books – Support will be considered for the purchase of compulsory set books that you are required to buy, as listed in the module description.</p>	<p>Copies of any receipts showing purchase of set books. We can not accept invoices or order forms unless they show payment has been made in full.</p>
<p>Personal computer – Support towards the purchase cost of a personal computer will be considered up to a maximum of £200. Any course grant you have received will be taken into account as a contribution towards the cost of the computer you purchase. If you have already been awarded funding to help purchase a PC through this fund or any previous PC assisted purchase scheme you will not normally be eligible to apply.</p> <p>You can only claim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for a new computer • for a new printer <p>You can not claim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for a tablet computer, such as an ipad, or parts to upgrade your existing computer • for items purchased through Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) schemes unless the agreement has been paid in full • for items purchased second hand • if someone else in your household has been awarded a grant for a computer purchase. 	<p>Copy of your receipt showing cost of purchase, your name and address, date of purchase, details of the item purchased, vendor details and the payment method.</p> <p>If you have made a purchase using a Buy Now Pay Later or other credit scheme please provide a copy of the agreement or statement and written confirmation from the supplier that payment has now been made in full.</p> <p>If you are requesting an upfront payment you must supply quotes from recognised suppliers which detail the items you wish to purchase and how much they will cost.</p> <p>If you are claiming for DSA PC/Laptop contribution costs you must provide a copy of your Student Finance England DSA award letter.</p>
<p>Other study equipment – Support for the purchase of study equipment that you are required to buy, as listed in the module description.</p>	<p>Copies of any receipts showing purchase of study equipment. If the equipment you have purchased is not listed in the module description you must provide confirmation from your tutor that it is necessary.</p>
<p>Study materials – The cost of stationery, postage etc. – limited to £50 total expenditure per academic year.</p>	<p>Details of expenditure and copies of receipts. We can not accept invoices or order forms unless they show payment has been made in full.</p>
<p>Printer – The cost of a printer limited to £50 total expenditure.</p>	
<p>Ink – the cost of ink limited to £50 total expenditure per academic year.</p>	

Awards are granted at the discretion of the Open University. Claims outside the criteria detailed above will require further supporting evidence (e.g. a letter from your tutor).

Section 8: Payment

Payment will be made by cheque unless you have previously received a course grant for a module studied with The Open University.

8.1 Change of bank details (for students who have previously received a course grant for an Open University module)

If you have previously received a course grant for a module studied with The Open University, any award made will be paid directly into your bank, building society or Post Office savings account using the information we already hold on our records. If you wish the award to be paid into a different account please provide details.

If the new account is a building society account, you should find out from the Society whether you also need to give the roll number. If so, write it in the appropriate box.

The account you nominate must be in the UK and able to accept payments by direct credit.

Check with your bank or building society if you are not sure.

8.2 Payments to third parties

Support provided in relation to Sections 6 and 7 can take the form of a payment to you or a third party. Where appropriate, we would make the award in the form of a cheque(s) payable to the relevant third party(ies) concerned. To allow us to do this for you, we need your agreement. You also need to supply the name of the third party as it should appear on a cheque made payable to them.

Any payments made in this way will be sent to you to forward as appropriate.

Payments awarded for DSA PC/Laptop Contributions will be made directly to the DSA-QAG accredited supplier by special arrangement with the University.

Section 10: Declaration

10.1 Your Declaration

Please make sure you understand the declarations in this section. Then you, and your partner or spouse if they are listed on this application form, should sign and date the boxes. **We will be unable to consider your application unless it is accompanied by all the required supporting evidence and has been properly signed and dated.**

Please return your completed application form by post, together with all the supporting evidence required to Student Fees. Unfortunately, we cannot accept applications by fax or email.

**Student Fees
The Open University
PO Box 6055
Milton Keynes
MK10 1NH**

Phone 01908 653411 (Monday to Thursday 8:30 to 17:30, Friday 8:30 to 17:00)

Email studentfees@open.ac.uk

Now use the checklist at the back of the application form to ensure that you have completed the form correctly and provided all the evidence required.



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