University of Chichester 2024/25 Support Fund – Information and Guidance for Students

Financial Help

**You will need to be registered for the 2024/25 academic year before we can assess your application.**

Support Fund

The University of Chichester has created this fund to assist students with costs associated with their ability to study where these are not being sufficiently met from statutory (or other) sources of funding, and to provide emergency contributions towards the cost of unexpected crises. The fund is limited and cannot fully compensate for limited Student Finance awards, lack of parental contribution, or over expenditure on non-essential items.

Standard Awards

Standard awards assist with the general costs of being a student, where essential expenditure is offset against expected income. Students are required to submit evidence to support their application in order that their income and expenditure can be accurately assessed.

Non-Standard Awards

One-off discretionary awards can be provided to fulfil a certain need that has arisen after a crisis or is required for exceptional reasons. Applications will be assessed on a case-by case basis with any award being at the discretion of the Support Fund Panel.

How is hardship defined by the University?

A student is considered to be in financial hardship when their allowable expenditure is higher than their income.

We would consider income, where applicable, as including:

* Student Maintenance Loan
* Earnings / Assumed income (it is assumed that most students have the ability to work alongside their study)
* NHS bursary
* Non-means tested benefits (eg - Universal Credit)
* Family contributions / Assumed parental contributions
* Savings over £1,000
* Partner’s income

Allowable expenditure includes (but is not exclusive to):

* University Accommodation fees (in full)
* Rent / Mortgage (capped at relevant Chichester’s Broad Rental Market Area figure)
* Travel to University / Placements / Home
* Childcare
* Course costs (nominal figure provided for each course)
* Composite living costs (this is determined by the Support Fund administrators and covers basic costs such as food, household bills, clothes, entertainment etc. this ensures that all applicants are treated fairly, regardless of their individual lifestyle choices)
* IT equipment costs
* Medical expenses

Who can apply?

**All registered UK and EU Undergraduate and Postgraduate University of Chichester students** are eligible to apply. (EU students must have at least pre-settled status)

Priority will be given to the following students:

* Care leavers
* Estranged students
* Students with dependents (especially lone parents)
* Mature students with existing financial commitments
* Young carers

Before applying to the fund, there is an expectation that you will have exhausted all avenues of funding available to you, including all Student Loans you are entitled to.

Students are expected to utilise any significant savings available to them before applying to the fund. An application can be refused if significant savings are available to you. Please read our FAQ’s to see what we would class as significant savings.

What help is available?

The fund aims to provide financial support to contribute to particular costs which are not already being met from statutory (or other) sources of funding such as:

* Lack of funds for rent and general living costs
* IT repairs or laptop costs incurred to enable you to meet the requirements of your course
* Unexpected one-off costs NB: you will be asked to provide supporting evidence of the unexpected cost with your application.
* Diagnostic assessments or specialist equipment if student is found to have a shortfall in income.
* Providing extra support if you are considering leaving higher education because of financial problems

What costs will the fund not cover?

* Tuition fees
* Credit card debt
* A debt which pre-dates your enrolment
* Loan repayments

If you are struggling to pay your tuition fees or Halls of Residence accommodation fees, please contact Sales Ledger to discuss a suitable payment plan. [salesledger@chi.ac.uk](mailto:salesledger@chi.ac.uk)

For student funding, debt management and budgeting advice, please contact the Student Money Team. [studentmoney@chi.ac.uk](mailto:studentmoney@chi.ac.uk)

Points to consider before applying to the University Support Fund

* Have you applied for all Student Loans available to you?
* If you receive a lower maintenance loan, do you receive a parental contribution towards living costs?
* Do you have significant savings available to you? (e.g. ISA, cryptocurrency/trading portfolio)
* Are your outgoings larger than your expected income? And the reason for this.
* For Postgraduate students, have you made reasonable provision for your expected living costs and tuition fees prior to starting your course? (e.g. student loan, significant savings, parental contribution agreement, scholarship stipend)
* Have you considered the travel costs you will incur throughout the year?

**Please note** that the assessors endeavour to take into consideration everyone's circumstance while maintaining a standard and thorough approach to assess applications in a fair and consistent way. For this reason, a certain level of income is assumed for each year of study and certain expenditure such as rent (other than Halls of Residence), composite living costs and course costs are capped at a reasonable figure in line with the current Govt. guidelines.

Submit an application

**You will need to be registered for the 2024/25 academic year before we can assess your application**

Please review our FAQs before you apply. Our FAQ’s provide more information about the types of funding available and the evidence you will need to support your application. It will also include advice on how to access this evidence.

You will need to allow sufficient time to complete the application in one go, so have all of your student and financial information to hand. Please only submit one application with all the necessary information.

Should you need support in completing an application, advisers from the Student Money Team would be pleased to assist you. You can also request to complete a paper copy of the application form by emailing [studentmoney@chi.ac.uk](mailto:studentmoney@chi.ac.uk)

We endeavour to process applications within two weeks of receiving your fully completed form and all of your supporting evidence. However, applications submitted during the busier times of year may take up to four weeks.

Frequently asked questions

* 1. **Will I get into trouble with the University for asking for money?**

No, definitely not. We are here to help and do not want your studies to be adversely affected due to money worries. There is, however, only so much financial assistance we are able to provide.t

* 1. **How do I apply for funds?**

Applying for funds is simple but you will need to have all of your information to hand before you start your application as the form needs to be completed in one go. You will need to provide information about yourself and your financial circumstances. You will be asked to upload evidence of your situation along with your application e.g. copies of your last three month’s bank statements, a copy of your Student Finance award letter and a copy of your rental agreement.

Five step application process:

1. Apply online via the orange coloured portal in the Finance section of your ChiView Account, and upload the evidence requested. Be as open as you can; the more we know about your circumstances, the better equipped we are to help you.
2. We will confirm via email that your application has been received.
3. An assessor will review your application and ask for more information if necessary
4. Your application will be processed and then considered at a Support Fund Panel Meeting following which, you will be informed of our decision via email.
5. If you have been successful, you will be sent an email with a link which will ask you to provide your bank account details. Money is paid electronically on Fridays. If you provide your bank details prior to 12 noon on Wednesday, the money should be paid on the Friday of the same week. If you miss this deadline, it will be paid on the Friday of the following week.
   1. **I’m about to start studying with you, when can I apply for help?**

You are not able to apply to the Support Fund until you are registered on your course at the beginning of the academic year.

Please note that there is an expectation you have made reasonable provision to support yourself during your study period prior to commencing your programme, either through savings or employment, especially if you are a post-graduate student.

* 1. **How long does it take to get a decision?**

We will do our best to process your application as quickly as we can but will prioritise depending on individual circumstances, so we can deal with the most urgent cases first.

To prevent your application being delayed, it is important to provide accurate answers to all questions and to attach all supporting documentation. We are unable to process applications which are either incomplete or missing supporting evidence.

We aim to inform you of a decision within two weeks of receiving your completed application and evidence. At peak times however, assessments may take up to **four weeks. These timings do not include Christmas and Easter breaks.**

* 1. **What is the difference between a Standard Award and a Non-Standard (Discretionary) Award?**

Standard awards assist with the general costs of being a student, where essential expenditure is offset against expected income. Students are required to submit evidence to support their application in order that their income and expenditure can be accurately assessed. Awards provided will be a percentage of any shortfall in income and will be capped. The cap and / or percentage may change during the year according to the number of applicants and the balance of the remaining fund. It is possible that if you are given an award in Semester one, you may receive a further top-up later in the academic year if funds allow. This is not a guarantee.

One-off discretionary awards can be provided to fulfil a certain need that has arisen after a crisis or is required for exceptional reasons. In these circumstances we will usually ask for evidence relating to the particular cost. Applications will be assessed on a case-by case basis with any award being at the discretion of the Support Fund Panel.

Both awards are non-repayable.

* 1. **What evidence should I upload with my Support Fund application?**

Depending on the type of support that you are applying for, you will be asked to submit relevant supporting evidence. As a general rule, you are likely to be requested to provide:

* **Evidence of your financial situation:** as a minimum we will require the most recent three months bank statements for each of your current and savings accounts, including ISA accounts etc.
* **A written explanation of any transactions £100 or over** for each bank account statement.
* **Evidence of your income** (e.g. Student Loan letter, wage slips, bursary letters, benefit letters etc.)
* **Evidence of your outgoings** as a minimum we will require tenancy agreement/ mortgage statement)
* **Evidence of specific one-off costs** (e.g. invoices/quotes relating to the cost you need help with)

You can upload this information easily within your application in a variety of formats such as images from your phone. More information is provided on the application form and you won’t be able to complete your application without attaching the required evidence.

* 1. **I need help to pay for my DSA Laptop contribution / diagnostic assessment, what should I do?**

Make an application to the Support Fund if you are struggling with the cost of paying for your £200 DSA laptop contribution, or for an assessment for dyslexia or other learning disability. If you are found to have a shortfall in your income, you will receive a Standard Award as a percentage of your shortfall **and** a Non-standard Award for the cost of your DSA Laptop contribution or diagnostic assessment contribution.

* 1. **I am an International student, am I eligible to apply to the Support Fund**

We are unable to accept applications from international students for Standard means tested Awards. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible at the director’s discretion to make a Non-Standard (discretionary) award. If you are an international student please discuss your situation with the International Team [international@chi.ac.uk](mailto:international@chi.ac.uk) who will refer you to the Student Money Team if they feel you have a case. Do not complete an application form unless invited to do so by the Student Money Team.

* 1. **I am a Postgraduate student, am I eligible to apply for support?**

All registered UK and EU Postgraduate University of Chichester students are eligible to apply to the Support Fund. (EU students must have at least pre-settled status). However, you will be expected to have made sufficient provision to cover your costs whilst at university and a ‘notional post-graduate income’ figure will be added to your calculations. For 2023-24 it is assumed that a Post-graduate would have £219 for each week of the academic year (£175 for students with dependents / caring responsibilities / unable to work because of disability). Therefore, for a 39-week course you would be expected to have either £8,541 or £6,825 towards your living expenses.

* 1. **I am a mature student, am I eligible to apply for support?**

Yes, all registered UK and EU Undergraduate and Postgraduate students are eligible to apply. (EU students must have at least pre-settled status). If your course is part-time or you commute to University, you are also still eligible for support.

We recognise that as mature students, you may face a number of unique issues, such as having pre-existing financial commitments or caring responsibilities, and these will be considered in your application. If you have dependents, or commuting is necessary for your course, please let us know and this will be considered in your application. Please note we will ask for supporting documents to evidence these costs. We also require copies of birth certificates for any children who are financially dependent on you.

* 1. **I am a part-time student, am I eligible to apply for support?**

Yes, all registered UK and EU Undergraduate and Postgraduate students whether full-time or part-time are eligible to apply. (EU students must have at least pre-settled status). However, where a Standard ‘means tested’ Award is eligible due to your reasonable expenditure exceeding your expected income, you will be awarded a lower percentage of your shortfall than if you were full-time. This is because it is assumed that, as the intensity of your course is significantly less than for a full-time student, you are capable of generating a greater income through paid employment or other means.

* 1. **I have intermitted my studies, am I eligible to apply for support?**

As a general rule, you will not be considered eligible for support if you have intermitted your studies. There may be exceptions, however, particularly during the first couple of weeks following your intermission to support your transition away from University and also during the period after we receive your intention to return. This type of application will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis but we would encourage you to apply in order that we can fully assess your circumstances.

* 1. **Can I still get help if I am repeating elements of my course / rewriting my dissertation?**

As long as you remain enrolled on an eligible course you are eligible to apply to the Support Fund. However, if you have already made an application in the relevant year, you will need to submit a new application and provide evidence of the additional costs that these circumstances are causing you to incur.

* 1. **How much am I likely to receive from the Support Fund as a Standard ‘means tested’ Award?**

The University of Chichester 2024/25 Support Fund is limited and cannot fully compensate for limited Student Finance awards, lack of parental contribution, or over expenditure on non-essential items.

The amount awarded will be based on your circumstances. In order to assess expenditure, we use a standard calculation for rent which is based on the current accommodation rates for the Broad Rental Market Area of Chichester. Only the actual cost of Halls of Residence is accepted as the figure for accommodation expenditure, due to students having limited or no choice. We also use a standard calculation for ‘Composite Living Costs’ which covers: groceries, household bills, clothing, entertainment etc. This ensures that all applicants are treated fairly, regardless of where they study and their individual lifestyle choices.

Most students are expected to be able to gain paid employment whilst studying, whether this be a part-time job during the academic year or during the holidays (or both). An assumed income will therefore be applied in the calculations bespoke to your current year and level of study.

Once your income and expenditure has been accurately assessed. You will only receive an award if you are assessed as having a shortfall in your income. In this case any award will be a percentage of this shortfall but will be capped (ie, there is a maximum award set). The cap and / or percentage may change during the year according to the number of applicants and the balance of the remaining fund. It is possible that if you are given an award in Semester one, you may receive a further top-up later in the academic year if funds allow. This is not a guarantee and should not be expected, even if you have received a top-up in previous years.

* 1. **Can I apply more than once per academic year?**

As a general rule, **you can only apply once** **per academic year**. The reason for this is that we calculate your income and expenditure over the whole period of study for the year and the figures should, therefore not change. However, if in exceptional circumstances, some event has caused the figures to change beyond your control, you are advised to contact the Student Money Team [studentmoney@chi.ac.uk](mailto:studentmoney@chi.ac.uk) . You may be invited to a meeting to discuss your situation and where we will agree on the appropriate way forward. This may require you to submit a further change of circumstances statement along with your last three months of bank statements.

Where a new calculation results in a higher short-fall in income, any award already received will be taken into consideration when calculating your new award.

* 1. **Why do you require my partner’s income and outgoings?**

If you are living with your partner and are sharing household bills, we do ask you provide details of your partners’ income and outgoings to provide an overview your financial situation. Without this information, we are unable to fully assess your application.