

Financial Assistance Fund Policy

1. Introduction and values

- 1.1. The Financial Assistance Fund (FAF) is provided by Queen Mary University of London (QMUL, Queen Mary, the University) to help students who are experiencing financial hardship that might impact on their ability to participate on their course of study. There are two types of award: standard and exceptional.
- 1.2. Standard awards are awarded to help with general costs of being a student after comparison of a student's income and expenditure; if there is a shortfall, a percentage is covered by the FAF standard award with a maximum of £3500 a year. All home undergraduate students fully enrolled are eligible to apply.
- 1.3. Exceptional awards are for unforeseen, one-off or urgent circumstances. Applications are considered by the FAF panel which consists of staff members from the Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Office, welfare advisors from Advice and Counselling and Student's Union VP Welfare. Enrolled students based on London campuses whether home or international, QMUL students studying at University of London Institute in Paris or students studying abroad as part of their course are eligible to apply.
- 1.4. This policy provides more information and outlines how to apply, key deadlines, eligibility, other exceptional awards and short-term loans.

2. Scope and purpose

- 2.1. The Financial Assistance Fund (FAF) is provided by Queen Mary University of London to help students who are experiencing financial hardship that might impact on their ability to participate on their course of study. This includes:
 - a) assisting those who need extra financial help to meet particular costs which are not being met from statutory (or other) sources of funding.
 - b) providing emergency payments for unexpected crises
 - c) intervening in cases where a student may be considering leaving Queen Mary because of financial problems.

3. Overview of the 2025/26 provision: Principles

- 3.1. FAF cannot be used to assist with Tuition Fee costs.
- 3.2. FAF will be reviewed on a regular basis and Queen Mary reserves the right to amend the Fund eligibility criteria or to cease the fund at any time.
- 3.3. Applications for assistance from the Fund will be administered by the Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Office (BGS). The Fund will be monitored throughout the academic year, however, should it be spent in full before the end of the academic year, further applications will not be considered.
- 3.4. The BGS Team refer to the National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA) Higher Education Support Fund Guidance 2025/26 where appropriate to establish consistency in assessing applications and making awards.

4. Eligibility

- 4.1. The Funds are open to students who are currently enrolled and meet the eligibility criteria below:
 - a) Current students ordinarily based at our London campuses
 - b) Students studying abroad as part of their course
 - c) QMUL students studying at ULIP
- 4.2. The following are not eligible to apply to the fund:
 - a) MBBS Malta students
 - b) Degree apprenticeship students
- 4.3. The Fund cannot be used as a main source of income and awards made are not at the level to replace core living costs.
- 4.4. To apply for the fund, students must prove that they have made realistic provision to support themselves and any dependents throughout their programme at Queen Mary. If they are eligible, they must have taken out full maintenance funding from the UK government and have made use of any other funding available to them. This ensures that our limited funds are allocated to students who have already maximised all sources of funding available to them.
- 4.5. The UK Government Department of Education sets the rules for Fee status:
<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student-advice/fees>

- 4.6. Undergraduate students who are not eligible for full maintenance funding need to demonstrate that they have made realistic provision to cover their core living costs such as rent, travel and food.

5. Application process

- 5.1. All applications must be submitted by students via the Scholarships and Bursaries section of MySIS.
- 5.2. Undergraduate Home Students
 - a) Applications open from 15 September 2025.
 - b) Applications for Standard Awards should be submitted by Friday 17 April 2026
 - c) Applications for Exceptional Awards should normally be submitted at least 4 weeks before the end of your academic year but continuing students can apply until Friday 10 July 2026 subject to funds being available.
- 5.3. Postgraduate and International Students
 - a) Applications open from 15 September 2025
 - b) For students ending their studies before 10 July 2026, applications must be submitted 4 weeks before the end of your course, otherwise you can apply until Friday 10 July 2026
- 5.4. Students will receive an email to their University email account once their application has been submitted. The Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships team may contact students for further information or evidence to process the application, and students are advised to check their University email account regularly as any delay in submitting this information will cause a delay in the assessment of the application.
- 5.5. Applicants will usually receive a decision on your application within three weeks of our having received all the documents and information required in support of your application.

6. Assessment process: Undergraduate Home Students

- 6.1. In addition to statutory funding available for home undergraduate students, funds are provided in line with national policy to support the retention and success of undergraduate students who may need additional financial assistance.
- 6.2. The funds are open to all eligible undergraduate home students, however priority

is given to certain groups of students when deciding how to allocate the funding. These include:

- a) Students with children (especially lone parents)
- b) Disabled students (especially where the Disabled Students' Allowance is unable to meet particular costs)
- c) Students who are care experienced or estranged
- d) Undergraduates in their final year of their study

6.3. Students can apply for standard and exceptional awards.

Standard awards

6.4. These awards are intended to help with the general costs of being a student.

6.5. Applications are assessed using the standard procedure set out by NASMA which takes into account expected income and a sum considered to be a reasonable level of expenditure.

6.6. Using the standard assessment BGS staff calculate income for the academic year compared with expenditure. If there is a shortfall, students can be made an award which is a percentage of their shortfall, up to a maximum of £3500. The percentage of contribution is set each year according to funds available, by the FAF Panel. Current contributions are:

Undergraduate student - Non-Priority Group	50%
Undergraduate student – Priority Group	70%
Undergraduate student with children	100%

6.7. To ensure that all students are treated fairly, certain figures are set at the beginning of the academic year by the FAF Panel and in accordance with NASMA guidelines

6.8. For undergraduate students the following rates of assumed income are used:

First year students	£2291
Non first or final year	£1528
Final year	£765

- 6.9. This assumed income is the student’s contribution to their costs for the academic year and can come from a number of sources, including part time work, additional support from parents, partner or family, bank overdraft facilities and savings.
- 6.10. The assessment uses a Reasonable Living Costs (RLC) figure to cover expenditure on basic costs such as foods, household bills, clothes, entertainment, etc., which ensures that all applicants are treated fairly regardless of where they study and regardless of their individual lifestyle choices. The relevant amounts vary based on circumstances, and for students studying in London they are as follows:

Single student	£181 per week
Student with partner	£245 per week
Single parent	£181 per week plus £106 per child

- 6.11. In recognition of the current cost of living the RLC figures have been uplifted by 3.1% this year.
- 6.12. The ceiling for combined rent and travel is £235 per week.

Exceptional awards

- 6.13. These awards are open to all eligible students.
- 6.14. These awards are for students experiencing unforeseen, exceptional circumstances that have resulted in an impact on their planned funding after the start of their course. The fund can assist with one-off, short-term or urgent situations only. The fund cannot provide support for core living costs where students have not made realistic provision to fund their studies or the change in their financial circumstances is not short-term.
- 6.15. Applications for exceptional awards are considered by the FAF Panel, which meets weekly during term time. The FAF Panel members are:
- a) Assistant Academic Registrar from the BGS Office
 - b) Team Members from the BGS Office
 - c) Welfare Advisers from the Advice and Counselling Service
 - d) VP for Welfare from the Students’ Union

Other exceptional awards (Undergraduate Home Students)

- 6.16. DSA Assessment: Students can apply for £200 assistance towards the cost of a laptop, as recommended on their DSA2 letter. Information on how to apply is available at: <https://dds.qmul.ac.uk/disability/200-award-towards-dsa-funded-computer>
- 6.17. Student Parents: Students with children can apply for an award of up to £500 to help with their additional costs.
- 6.18. Students interrupting study or re-sitting out of attendance: These students are expected to make provision to support themselves, however if a student has not permanently withdrawn from their studies and intends to return after a period of interrupting their studies, they may get limited help if their circumstances are exceptional.

7. Assessment process: Postgraduate and International Students

- 7.1. The funds for Postgraduate and International students are limited as these students are expected to have made adequate provision to fund both their tuition fees and living expenses. The funds can only provide support in exceptional cases.

Exceptional awards

- 7.2. Exceptional awards are open to all eligible Postgraduate and International students.
- 7.3. These awards are for students experiencing unforeseen, exceptional circumstances that have resulted in an impact on their planned funding after the start of their course. The fund can assist with one-off, short-term or urgent situations only. The fund cannot provide support for core living costs where students have not made realistic provision to fund their studies or the change in their financial circumstances is not short-term.
- 7.4. Applications for exceptional awards are considered by the FAF Panel, which meets weekly during term time. The FAF Panel members are:
 - a) Assistant Academic Registrar from the BGS Office (chair)
 - b) Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Officer from the BGS Office (deputy chair)
 - c) Team Members from the BGS Office
 - d) Welfare Advisers from the Advice and Counselling Service

- e) VP for Welfare from the Students' Union

Evidence requirements

- 7.5. Students must ensure all applications are supported by evidence of circumstances, although this should be kept to the minimum necessary to verify the information provided.
- 7.6. When assessing an application for the Fund, it is expected that the student will provide evidence listed in the application to enable an assessment to be undertaken. The Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Team may also request further evidence in order to complete an assessment for support.
- 7.7. If a student declares, or demonstrates through bank transactions, that there is regular and substantial non-essential spend, the Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Team may refer students to relevant services prior to making an award. Examples of this may be a student with regular gambling activity or excessive spending on entertainment, shopping or other non-essentials. Awards from FAF are to assist with essential outgoings, therefore it is important that students seek support with issues leading to excessive non-essential expenditure and evidence may be required that the student has accessed relevant support, prior to an award being made.

8. Amounts Available

- 8.1. Awards range from £250 to a maximum £3500, however a student cannot receive more than £3500 in any academic year.

9. Payment of FAF award

- 9.1. Once an award has been assessed, students will receive confirmation of the amount and payment dates by email. Payments are made by bank transfer. As part of the application process, students must provide their bank account name, sort code and account number.
- 9.2. The BGS Team provide details to Queen Mary's Finance Department on a weekly basis of any awards from the Fund that have been approved.

10. Appeals and re-assessments

- 10.1. If students are not satisfied with the decision and would like their application to be reconsidered on the basis that they have further information which they did not disclose with their original application, they may do so by submitting their documentation to bursaries@qmul.ac.uk within fourteen days of the date of the decision.
- 10.2. If a student has no further information to disclose and wishes to appeal against the decision, they must submit an appeal to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office (ACCO) within fourteen days of the date of the decision. Further details of how to submit an Administrative Appeal can be found [on the ACCO webpages](#).
- 10.3. Applications are assessed to cover the whole academic year. If a student experiences a change in circumstances they can contact BGS Office and ask for a re-assessment.

11. Short-term loans

- 11.1. Short-term loans can only be issued to undergraduate home students where their SLC or NHS funding has been delayed. No Short-term loans can be made before the start of the academic year.
- 11.2. Students must have made an application for the correct SLC or NHS funding and be able to evidence this funding is delayed due to factors outside of their control.
- 11.3. Students must complete a Short-term Loan Form and agree the amount (no more than £350) which they are requesting, and the terms of repayment for this.
- 11.4. Students should make prompt repayment of this loan when their SLC or NHS funding is approved and paid. Failure to do so may lead Queen Mary to seek repayment from any subsequent funding awarded, or to limit a student's eligibility for future financial support.

12. Review

- 12.1. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.
- 12.2. Minor updates to this policy that do not affect the rules, principles or intent of this policy may be approved by the Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary on behalf of the Senior Executive Team (SET).

Appendix 1: Financial Assistance Fund rates

These rates are the fixed figures used in assessment process for standard awards for undergraduate home students.

Assumed Income (annual)	2025/26
First Year	2291
Other Years	1528
Final Year	765
Parent or disabled	0

Queen Mary Bursary Disregard (annual) <i>*deducted from any bursary award in our calculation</i>	
All Years	500

Reasonable Living Costs (weekly)	
Single - London	181
Lone Parent - London	181
With Partner - London	245
Single - Elsewhere	117
Lone Parent - Elsewhere	117
With Partner - Elsewhere	182
One Child	138
Each Additional Child	106

Rent and Travel (weekly) <i>*maximum amount considered in our calculation</i>	
All Years	235

Appendix 2: Examples of Exceptional Circumstances Awards

Applications for Exceptional Awards are considered on a case-by-case basis. However, these are typical amounts that a student in financial hardship may receive in the following circumstances:

Unable to work due to ill health	£750
Sudden loss of earnings	Up to £750
Unable to access an overdraft due to poor credit	£500
DSA Contribution	£200

Policy Information and Document Control

Policy title	Financial Assistance Fund Policy
Version number	Version 2.1 (2025/26 academic year)
Related policies and procedures	Administrative Appeals Policy
Superseded policies	None, other than the Financial Assistance Fund Policy for the 2024/25 academic year.
Approval level	SET (from the next full review)
Approval date	
Effective date	September 2025
Next review due	Annual updates will take place to the policy. A full review of the policy is due in Summer 2027.
Policy owner	Lesley Green, Assistant Academic Registrar - Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships
Policy contact	Bursaries, Grants & Scholarships team via email at bursaries@qmul.ac.uk .

Version Control

Version	Date	Reason for updates/Summary of key changes
2.1	August 2025	Annual updates to figures only.
2	September 2024	Update following FAF review and annual changes.